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DETERRENCE AND REASSURANCE IN LITHUANIAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

by

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June 2004

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IN LITHUANIAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

Lithuania's security rests at present on several pillars, including membership in NATO and the European Union and its relations with Russia. Without doubt Lithuania's membership in NATO and the European Union is the most promising way to preserve its independence and to promote its security. At the same time, however, Lithuania wishes to maintain constructive relations with Russia and to address Moscow's legitimate political, military, and economic concerns. In view of the importance of domestic political factors, this thesis examines the hypothesis that Lithuania should base its security on a mix of deterrence strategies and reassurance policies pursued in cooperation with fellow members of NATO and the European Union. The thesis therefore analyzes post-Cold War trends in Lithuanian-Russian relations in light of theories of deterrence and reassurance. Three cases—NATO enlargement from 1997 to 2004, the Russian military troop withdrawal from Lithuania in 1991-1993, and Lithuanian-Russian relations concerning Kaliningrad—are discussed to assess the effects of reassurance and cooperative policies and to infer possible implications for the future.

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This thesis is dedicated to my family. I really appreciate their patience and love, which helped me tremendously in completing this thesis. Although they were not with me in Monterey, I felt their warm support, especially that of my wife, Jelena Kiskiene, while here at the Naval Postgraduate School.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Among the dramatic changes that took place in Eastern Europe in 1989-1990, one unprecedented event is worth particular attention – on 11 March 1990, Lithuania became the first union republic to declare its independence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Moscow's reaction was negative, despite Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's announcement two months earlier about a possible secession. The Kremlin had tolerated, even encouraged, changes that occurred in the Warsaw Pact countries, but objected when these changes affected Soviet territory directly. Gorbachev attempted to isolate Lithuania and to intimidate other republics by using diplomatic and economic pressure. This conflict culminated in military action conducted by the Soviet army in Vilnius on 13 January 1991, during which 13 civilians were killed and many injured.

These events have raised an old and still unresolved security problem for Lithuania – “Being pro-Western, but not anti-Eastern.” In other words, being a part of Western civilization, but at the same time being seen by Moscow as not anti-Russian. This posture entailed remaining an independent state, while not undermining its own security. Two factors have been major determinants of Lithuania's security from the beginning of the country's history. First, Lithuania geographically lies between Western civilization, defined by Latin Christianity, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment, and an Eastern civilization shaped by Orthodox Christianity and Russian dominance. As a result, through six centuries, Lithuania has endured and been devastated by the clash of interests between Germans, Swedes and Russians. Second, Lithuania is in Russia's immediate proximity. Any major political changes in Russia or in its military power influenced Lithuania directly. From the very beginning Lithuania gravitated toward the West, but this approach created problems with Russia, which saw Western civilization as unfriendly and even antagonistic. Lithuania's long history of negative experiences with Russia proves how difficult it is to resolve the problem of being independent and secure. Lithuanian independence was challenged repeatedly. In the 16th century Tsar Ivan IV launched the Livonian War (1557-82), hoping to gain access to the Baltic Sea; and Lithuania had to become a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the 18th

century the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth came to an end, and Lithuania became a part of the Russia Empire. In the 20th century, after the redistribution of areas of influence between Germany and the Soviet Union on 15 June 1940, Lithuania was annexed by the Soviet Union.

Lithuania's experience confirms that whenever Russia raised a strong military, it posed a real threat to Lithuanian independence. As the nation was unable to resist coercion effectively, Lithuania suffered huge cultural and human losses. To prevent such losses in the future, Lithuania, after it proclaimed independence, sought membership in the European Union (EU) and NATO. In April-May 2004 Lithuania joined NATO and the EU. Without doubt, gaining membership in NATO and the EU is a positive step and the most promising way to gain confidence in efforts to preserve Lithuanian independence. But can membership in NATO ensure Lithuanian security in the future in view of this nation's old dilemma—that is, how can Lithuania be independent and secure?

A. THE MAIN CHALLENGE

There are two sides to the problem: the effects of Lithuanian membership in NATO on Russia and the effects of internal politics in Russia on Lithuania. Lithuania's main interest in NATO is to ensure its security in the long run. However, as most realist theorists argue, increasing one's security through the acquisition of allies simultaneously poses a threat to others. Regardless of the accuracy of this theory, it seems that many Russians view the membership of the Baltic States in NATO as threatening.

Political processes within Russia may influence Lithuania's security in two ways. Promoting democracy in Russia and making positive changes in its economy may create a favorable atmosphere for peace in the Baltic region, but anti-democratic trends in Russia may destabilize the situation in the region and consequently threaten Lithuanian security. Therefore internal politics in Russia promise to be important determinants of Lithuania's security. Russia's concerns and interests in the Baltic region directly influence Lithuania's bilateral relations with Moscow and its national security.

Therefore, under these circumstances, Lithuania must define and pursue prudent policies to preserve its security and integrity. What policies should Lithuania employ to preserve its independence and at the same time promote its security? This question has been the major challenge for the nation's political and military leaders because answering

it may help to solve the Lithuanian security problem. This is the main subject in an ongoing discussion between hard-liners who advocate deterrence and soft-liners who promote reassurance. Lithuanian politicians have employed both kinds of policy—cooperative (or reassurance) policies and non-cooperative (or deterrence) policies.

At the beginning of independence in the early 1990s, the non-cooperative policies were pursued, and as a consequence, an atmosphere of hostility and animosity between Vilnius and Moscow prevailed. With a change in political leadership in Lithuania, the government adopted more cooperative policies, and this affected Lithuanian-Russian relations positively. Soft-liners support this policy and insist on continuing it as a way to insure Lithuanian security. But they overlook the long history of relations between these two countries and fail to note that Russia may have other than benign purposes in dealing with Lithuania. Hard-liners argue that only deterrence can create a favorable situation for improving the country's security. NATO's decision to expand further to the east promoted more fruitful Lithuanian-Russian discussions. Hard-liners interpret this as evidence that only deterrence works in relations with Russia.

Also, a wide range of research on the utility of different courses of action supporting deterrence, reassurance or neutrality policies has been conducted. The most widely accepted argument holds that only deterrence policies can help Lithuania solve its security problem. According to Mark Kramer, this policy improved regional stability in Europe and resulted in improving Lithuania's relations with Russia.¹ Antanas Stakishaitis has even asserted that Russia will appreciate Lithuania joining NATO because it will help Russia to rethink and accept a new world order, concentrating more attention on its internal problems, and eventually evolve to a more democratic state.² Charles Perry, Michael Sweeney, and Andrew Winner have noted that the EU is not likely to provide the Baltic States with sufficient guarantees against Russia, and that only NATO can be a guarantor against a possible resurgence in Russia's imperialistic ambitions.³

¹ Mark Kramer, "NATO, The Baltic States and Russia: A Framework for Sustainable Enlargement," *International Affairs*, vol.78, no. 4 (October 2002), 755.

² Antanas Stakishaitis, "Rusija ir Lietuivos Saugumas," (Russia and Lithuanian Security), in Egidijus Vareikis, *Skaitymai apie Nacionalini ir Tarptautini Sauguma (Readings about National and International Security)* (Vilnius: Atlantis, 2001), 86. This book is in Lithuanian, and all translations from this book are by the author of this thesis.

³ Charles M. Perry, Michael J. Sweeney, and Andrew C. Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region: Implications for U.S. Policy* (Dulles: Brassey's Inc., 2000), 183.

However, others hold that Lithuania joining NATO will have a negative impact and that it would be wiser to pursue more cooperative policies. Paul Gallis has reported that some opponents of enlargement think that it may only create “a Weimar Russia” and that it would be more prudent to leave European stability to institutions such as the EU and the OSCE (the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe).⁴ Grazina Meniotaite supports the same position and holds that joining NATO may only enlarge Lithuania’s old historical problem of “pro-West but not anti-East,” and that constructive cooperation with Russia is vital for Lithuania’s security.⁵

The approach scholars least support is neutrality. This is because neutrality in the current situation is less promising. As Beata Simanska has stated, in a world of total interdependence, in a world where regional conflicts spread easily from one state to another, in a world of new threats such as international terrorism, crime, failing states, depleted resources, and diseases, Lithuania’s neutrality is impossible.⁶ Therefore, it is not surprising that Lithuanian politicians did not even mention neutrality as a possible course in their discussions.

These contradicting views raise the following question: After Lithuania becomes a member of NATO, which policies might it pursue to solve the old security problem: how can it be pro-Western, but not anti-Russian? The main hypothesis investigated in this thesis is that NATO can address, to some degree, Lithuania’s security concerns, but that more cooperative policies should be employed to meet some of the challenges that Lithuania faces in its relations with Russia. Three questions may help answer the main one. First, what are Lithuania’s and Russia’s main concerns? Also, under what conditions can deterrence policies succeed, and what are their limitations? Lastly, under what conditions can reassurance policies succeed?

B. DETERRENCE AND REASSURANCE IN THEORY

Before beginning an analysis, there is a need to define some terms and basic assumptions that will be used to assess specific cases. First, according to Paul Huth, a

⁴ Paul E. Gallis, *NATO Enlargement: Pro and Con Arguments*, (Washington, D.C., CRS Report for Congress, 1997), available at <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/poppro.htm> (15 April 2003).

⁵ Grazina Meniotaite, *Lietuvos Saugumo Politika ir Integracijos Dilema* (The Security Policy of Lithuania and the Integration Dilemma) (Vilnius: Rastas, 1999), 14.

⁶ Beata Simanska, “Neutralitetas Siolaikiniam Pasauliui,” (Neutrality in Current World), in Egidijus Vareikis, *Readings about National and International Security* (Vilnius: Atlantas, 2001), 46.

deterrence strategy attempts to prevent an undesired action by convincing the party who may be contemplating such an action that the cost will exceed any possible gain. Huth presents four types of deterrence:

- Direct: to prevent an armed attack against a country's own territory;
- Extended: to prevent an armed attack against another country;
- Immediate: when threat is used in response to a pressing short term threat of attack;
- General: to prevent short-term crises and militarized conflicts from arising.⁷

In terms of Huth's definitions, Lithuania's membership in NATO can be regarded as promoting extended and general deterrence. In contrast, reassurance strategies are conceived as "a set of strategies that adversaries can use to reduce the likelihood of resorting to the threat or the use of force."⁸ In this thesis strategies of deterrence and reassurance are independent variables; Lithuania's security is a dependent variable, and the main intervening variables or factors that affect the outcome are the credibility of NATO and Lithuania and Russia's motivations.

According to deterrence theory, the success of a deterrence strategy is determined by a set of variables: the deterrer's credibility and capabilities; strategic, domestic, and psychological factors; and time. One of the most important variables is credibility. Richard Ned Lebow emphasizes the importance of credibility and points out four major conditions for deterrence success:

- Commitments should be clearly defined;
- Commitments should be communicated to the adversary;
- Commitments should be enforceable (having the capabilities to honor the commitments);
- The deterrer should have a strong resolve to carry out his threats (owing to a reputation based on his past behavior and apparent intentions).⁹

⁷ Paul K. Huth, "Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Debates," *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol.2 (1999), 26.

⁸ Janice Gross Stein, "Deterrence and Reassurance," in Philip E. Tetlock et al., *Behavior, Society, and Nuclear War*, vol. II (Oxford, 1991), 31.

⁹ Richard N. Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1981), 84-90.

According to these assumptions, the more specific the commitment is, the more likely it will be believed; but a commitment unknown to an adversary has no deterrence value. Moreover, the failure to develop the military capability to honor a commitment encourages an adversary to question the defender's resolve. Finally, a poor bargaining reputation encourages challenges.

As any theory or policy has its limitations, deterrence is not an exception. Deterrence can fail because of technical problems, political restraints or a domestic policy. It can also fail if there is a lack of commitment or a misperception. First, deterrence may fail because of technical problems or political constraints. According to Paul Huth, in the case of extended immediate deterrence, the mobilization and transportation of substantial allied forces beyond their borders could take a long time, but the situation in extended immediate deterrence requires a rapid movement of forces into position to repulse an attack. Moreover, successful deployment could be undercut by domestic and political constraints that prevent leaders from implementing more effective policies.¹⁰ Second, deterrence could fail because the actors are not committed. In this case it is conceivable that countries may have some domestic considerations (their own security, economic or political interests) that prevent them from expressing a strong commitment to defend an ally. Finally, "individual psychological biases" or "failures of overall national evaluative capabilities" may result in misperceptions that could lead to deterrence failures.¹¹

The use of reassurance may help to mitigate hostility and mistrust, reducing fears and the possibility of misperceptions. Consequently, it could also reduce or eliminate the negative effects of strategic and psychological factors. To succeed, reassurance strategies must overcome psychological, political and strategic obstacles. However, the main determinant of success is an adversary's motivation. According to Charles Glaser, states, according to their motives for expansion, can be divided into two categories: security-driven (or not-greedy) and non-security-driven (or greedy). Greedy states are willing to incur costs or risks for "non security expansion," while a non-greedy state is unwilling to

¹⁰ Huth, "Deterrence and International Conflict," 36.

¹¹ Charles L. Glaser, "Political Consequences of Military Strategy: Expanding and Refining the Spiral and Deterrence Models," *World Politics*, vol. 44, no. 4 (July 1992), 514.

run such risks. Potentially insecure states are inclined to be insecure in the face of military capabilities that they believe threaten their ability to defend themselves. By contrast, “always-secure” states recognize that the defender is interested in its security and would use force only in response to aggression.¹²

In view of the past history of Lithuania-Russia relations, we can formulate the hypothesis that Lithuania is “not-greedy” but potentially insecure and that Russia is “greedy” and potentially insecure. Joining the theories advanced by Janice Gross Stein and Charles Glaser, it may be hypothesized that, if an adversary is driven largely by domestic political needs or strategic weaknesses and is concerned largely about its own security (non-greedy but insecure), then a reassurance policy may be more appropriate than a strategy of deterrence.

If an adversary’s motives are only driven by gains (greedy and always secure), then a reassurance strategy may fail. In a situation of mixed motives (not-greedy but potentially insecure), reassurance may be more effective as a complement to deterrence.¹³ Other factors, such as strategic, domestic, psychological, and time factors are not considered here because of the limited scope of this thesis.

C. METHODOLOGY

To answer the main question, the relations between Lithuania and Russia from 1990 to 2003 are analyzed. The main concerns of Lithuania and Russia are considered as well as how deterrence and reassurance can address Lithuania’s concerns while taking Russia’s concerns into account. Deterrence and reassurance theories are employed in this thesis to assess the Lithuanian case. To test the argument that NATO can address to some degree Lithuania’s security concerns, but that to meet some of the challenges that Lithuania faces in its relations with Russia more cooperative policies should be employed, three cases are studied: Russia’s troop withdrawal from Lithuania, the Kaliningrad issue, and Lithuania’s membership in NATO.

The main factors to assess the outcomes of deterrence and reassurance policies used in this thesis are Russia’s motivations and NATO’s and Lithuania’s commitment to maintain the country’s independence.

¹² Glaser, “Political Consequences of Military Strategy: Expanding and Refining the Spiral and Deterrence Models,” 501-502.

¹³ Stein, *Deterrence and Reassurance*, 58-59.

The main sources for this thesis are official documents, journal articles, and books about security in the Baltic region. Information from the media and opinion polls are also used as supplemental material.

Chapter II reviews the relations between Lithuania and Russia and analyses Lithuania's main security concerns and Russia's concerns.

Chapter III considers whether and under what conditions deterrence in the form of NATO membership can address Lithuania's main security concerns. This chapter also discusses the limits of this approach.

Chapter IV examines NATO and Lithuanian reassurance policies to mitigate Russia's concerns. Three cases are examined in this chapter. This chapter also evaluates whether and to what extent these policies were successful.

Chapter V draws the main conclusions from the analysis. It presents some recommendations in order to create a more secure environment in the Baltic region and to insure Lithuanian security. This chapter also emphasizes the need for further studies in this area.

II. LITHUANIAN–RUSSIAN RELATIONS

A. THE HISTORY OF THE “BEING PRO-WEST BUT NOT ANTI-EAST” PUZZLE

As a nation, Lithuania emerged about 1230 under the leadership of Duke Mindaugas. He united Lithuanian tribes against attacks by the Teutonic Knights, and at the end of the 14th century Lithuania was already a vast empire, extending from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. However, under pressure from the Teutonic Knights, Lithuania could no longer stand alone; and to preserve its way of life, it looked to Poland for support. Polish support was ensured by a dynastic marriage in exchange for Lithuania’s conversion to Catholicism in 1386. This turning point in Lithuanian history was crucial in determining Lithuania’s development as an independent entity. However, its drive for independence and its inclination toward a Western way of life were challenged each time whenever Russia gained military power. Lithuania’s security and its status shifted with Russia’s military power.

The first change in Lithuania’s status occurred with Russia’s military and economic growth during the rule of Peter the Great. Russia attempted to expand to the Baltic coast, when Peter the Great launched the great Northern War (1700-21). After Sweden’s defeat and the transfer of Latvia and Estonia to Russia under the treaty of Nystad (1721), Russia, along with Prussia and Austria, launched a campaign to weaken the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth internally.¹⁴

In 1795, after several partitions Poland’s independent existence ended and Lithuania became a part of the Russia Empire. The Tsar, Nicholas I, implemented programs designed to integrate the Baltic States into the Russian Empire; these “Russification” policies were seen by Lithuanians as a cultural and political suppression.¹⁵ Russian social and political institutions were introduced. Lithuanian-language schools were forbidden, Lithuanian publications in the Latin script were outlawed, and the Roman Catholic Church was severely suppressed. The result of the

¹⁴ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, third edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 249.

¹⁵ George von Rauch, *The Baltic States: The Years of Independence* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 8.

Tsar's policies was resentment and nationalism, which grew into open unrest, disorder, and anti-Russian sentiment. This situation culminated in revolts against Russia's rule in 1830s. However, this and other uprisings were unsuccessful, and Lithuania remained under Russia's rule until 1918.

World War I led to the collapse of the Russian empire, making it possible for Lithuania to assert its statehood. On 16 February 1918, Lithuania declared its full independence. Independent Lithuania took a course of democratization and liberalization. In the 1920s, it was a democratic republic with a strong legislature, a weak executive, a multiparty system, and a proportional system of representation. A progressive land reform was introduced, a cooperative movement was organized, and a strong currency and fiscal management were established. Moscow, understanding its weaknesses at that time, abandoned its efforts to recover the Baltic States and signed the treaty in 1920 by which it renounced all claims to Lithuania's territory in perpetuity.¹⁶ Agreements of non-aggression or neutrality between Russia and Lithuania were signed in 1926 and renewed in 1931.

However, Lithuania's independence did not last long. After the redistribution of areas of influence between Germany and the Soviet Union on 15 June 1940, Lithuania was annexed by the Soviet Union. The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact let the Soviet Union expand its influence in the Baltic region. Within two months, Moscow forced Lithuania into signing a mutual assistance pact, authorizing the Soviet army to station 20,000 troops on its territory. Lithuania was incorporated into the Soviet Union as the result of well-controlled local elections.¹⁷ At first a pro-communist government was installed, and elections to a new parliament were organized. The elections were noncompetitive: a single approved list of candidates was presented to the voters. The parliament met on 21 July and declared Soviet rule, and thus Lithuania "joined" the Soviet Union on 6 August 1940.

During the initial phase of annexation, Soviet forces deported 14,000 and executed 2,000 political leaders, military officers and national elites. The Soviets

¹⁶ V. Stanley Vardys and Romuald J. Misiunas, "Introduction: The Baltic Peoples in Historical Perspective," in V. Stanley Vardys and Romuald J. Misiunas, eds., *The Baltic States in Peace and War 1917—1945* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), 10.

¹⁷ John Fitzmaurice, *The Baltic: A Regional Future* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 91.

deported another 60,000 Balts in a second wave of arrests in 1940.¹⁸ Groups of partisans, known as the “Forest Brothers,” resisted the Red Army’s return in 1944 by fighting until late 1953. However, this resistance was broken by the Russian-dominated Soviet Union, resulting in a forced collectivization of agriculture, rapid industrialization and Russification. Between 1944 and 1949 about 550,000 Lithuanians were deported to eastern Siberia and central Asia.¹⁹ Rapid industrialization created a need for industrial workers that fueled a huge wave of immigrants, reaching 160,000 by the mid-1950s.²⁰ The Soviet Union reduced the proportion of ethnic natives in the population of the Baltic States by deportations and Russian immigration, but it was not successful in Russification.

Only at the end of the 20th century, after the Soviet Union’s decline in power, did Lithuania again enjoy the possibility of independence. Reforms started by Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 facilitated popular movements that ultimately became political movements for independence. The Lithuanian Popular Front (Sajudis) calls for independence in 1988 were supported by high officials, including Yeltsin; and they led to Lithuania’s declaration of political and economical independence from the Soviet Union on 11 March 1990. The Soviet Union’s economic sanctions and attempts to dissuade Lithuania from seeking independence by using military force in Vilnius in January 1991 failed, as the result of the full support for independence expressed by the public, even among ethnic Russian voters, in the referendum held in March 1991.

This short overview illustrates Lithuania’s historical problem of being pro-West, but not anti-East. However, the current trends in Lithuanian – Russian relations can be seen as a continuation of this old problem.

B. POST-COLD WAR TRENDS

After proclaiming independence in 1991, Lithuania took a course toward integration into the EU and NATO. Without doubt Lithuania’s membership in NATO and the EU is the most promising way to preserve Lithuanian independence; however, it creates some problems in its relations with Russia. Moscow has expressed strong

¹⁸ John Fitzmaurice, *The Baltic: A Regional Future*, 112.

¹⁹ Anatol Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 114.

²⁰ Ibid., 183.

concerns about Lithuania's integration into the Western organizations, especially NATO, an organization that Russia still sees as a threat to its security. Russia's negative reaction highlights the continuation of a historic problem for Lithuania – "Being Pro-West, but not Anti-East." It is useful to analyze the concerns of Lithuania and Russia and the driving forces behind their policies toward one another, which aggravate the problems.

1. Lithuania's Concerns

Russia remains the main source of instability in the region and may pose a direct threat to Lithuania because there is uncertainty about the future political and economic developments in Russia. Moreover, Russia has the military ability and motivation for possible aggression.

a. Uncertainties about Russia's Future

To begin with, Russia is not a democratic state yet, and there are uncertainties about its future political and economic situation. Although there are signs of democratization in Russia's political system, they are not strong. The party system in Russia is still in its infancy and could be most accurately described as an oligarchy. According to Perry, Sweeney and Winner, the true basis of the political system is "individuals with strong ties to the former communist bureaucracy and/or to powerful business interests (legal or otherwise)." Though a radical "Zhirinovsky-type fascist coming to power" is not probable, the presence of other political leaders with communist and nationalist leanings such as Luzhkov (the mayor of Moscow) or Zyuganov (the Communist party leader) could indicate the possibility of a more aggressive Russian foreign policy.²¹ There is a possibility that strong pro-communist and nationalistic movements could negatively influence domestic developments in Russia. These developments could be especially disturbing if extreme nationalists and pro-communists gain a controlling influence over decision makers.

Another indicator of the weakness of democratic development in Russia is its foreign policy. Aside from the positive developments, there are signs that an aggressive imperialistic policy is reemerging in Russia. In the beginning, Russia's policy toward the Baltic States was positive. However, these positive signs lasted only until

²¹ Charles M. Perry, Michael J. Sweeney, and Andrew C. Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region: Implications for U.S. Policy* (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey's Inc., 2000), 58.

1995, when Russia changed its policy. In 1995-1996, Russia's political leaders started to employ aggressive rhetoric toward the Baltic States and some provocative security studies were conducted in Russia.

According to Jim Hoagland, Russian President Boris Yeltsin in his secret letter to US President Bill Clinton on 25 June 1996, just before the US president's meeting with the presidents of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, expressed the idea that "Moscow hopes to squeeze the three small states into acknowledging Russian hegemony in economic, military, and political matters."²²

Moreover, according to Yaroslav Bilinsky, in the middle 1990s, two important but unofficial Russian security studies were conducted regarding the Baltic States. The first, entitled "Alternative National Security Doctrine" and published in the fall of 1995, was secretly sponsored by Pavel Grachev, then Russian Defense Minister. The second one, published in 1996 and entitled "Will the Soviet Union Be Reborn? The Future of the Post-Soviet Space," was sponsored by the well-known Council on Foreign and Defense Policy in Moscow headed by Sergey Karaganov, a former Gorbachev and Yeltsin advisor. The first document proposed "stationing nuclear weapons in Belarus, *putting troops in the Baltics if they try to join NATO* and bombing oilfields in Azerbaijan."²³ The second one was more straightforward and stated Russia's vitally important interests that must be protected by using all means, including force:

- Preventing the dominance, especially military-political, of other powers on the territory of the former USSR;
- Preventing the formation of coalitions hostile to Russia, including those in response to Russian actions in the former USSR.²⁴

This message can be understood as a call, under certain conditions, for military actions against the Baltic States.

Although Russia's present foreign policy toward the Baltic States could be seen as more benign, there are some negative trends. In June 2000 President Vladimir

²² Jim Hoagland, "Fight for the Baltics," *Washington Post*, 4 August 1996, 7.

²³ Yaroslav Bilinsky, *Endgame in NATO's Enlargement: The Baltic States and Ukraine* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1999), 11; italics in the original.

²⁴ Yaroslav Bilinsky, *Endgame in NATO's Enlargement: The Baltic States and Ukraine*, 10 -11, and Scott Parrish, "Will the Soviet Union Be Reborn? The Future of the Post-Soviet Space," *Transition*, vol. 2, no. 15 (26 July 1996), 33.

Putin signed Russia's new foreign policy concept. It claims that "an indispensable condition here [for the Baltic States having good relations with Russia] is respect by those states of Russian interests."²⁵ But what if these interests are different? Another case is the dispute over the Soviet past. In June 2000, the Russian Duma declared that the Baltic republics had "voluntarily" joined the Soviet Union and "invited" Soviet troops to occupy their territory in the 1940s, while the Baltic States oppose such an interpretation of the past.²⁶ All these facts suggest a reemergence of an aggressive imperialistic policy in Russia by pressing smaller Baltic States, dictating rules to them, and using various instruments to restore an effective hegemony over this part of the former Soviet Union.

Also, Russia has revealed some imperialistic thoughts about economic expansion in the Baltic States' transport, communication, and machinery industries. Moscow has been especially interested in the energy sector, because Russia does not want be dependent on the Baltic States. For example, in 1998 the Russian oil giant Lukoil attempted to purchase a 30 percent stake in Ventspils Nafta.²⁷ Then, in September 2002, the Russian oil company "Juka" successfully acquired a controlling stake in the Lithuanian Oil Company "Mazeikiu Nafta."²⁸ On occasion, tensions have risen between Russia and Lithuania because of Moscow's periodic use of economic pressure (threats to withhold oil and gas supplies).

Serious structural problems confronting Russia's economy also present uncertainties about Russia's future. The government will not be able to solve all of Russia's economic difficulties in the near future. As William Odom has observed,

Certain institutions of government are imperative for effective economic performance. Efficient allocation of property rights, a reliable third-party enforcer of market rules and contracts, and behavioural norms that lower transaction costs are among the most important. Russia neither has them nor shows any likelihood of creating them soon.²⁹

²⁵ *Foreign policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, 28 June 2000, available at <http://www.russiaeurope.mid.ru/RussiaEurope/concept.html> (27 January 2004).

²⁶ Mark Kramer, "NATO, The Baltic States and Russia: A Framework for Sustainable Enlargement," *International Affairs*, vol.78, no. 4 (October 2002), 734.

²⁷ Perry, Sweeney, and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 71.

²⁸ "YUKOS Acquires Controlling Stake in Lithuanian Mazeikiu Nafta," *Pravda* (20 September 2002), available at <http://english.pravda.ru/comp/2002/09/20/36951.html> (12 March 2004).

²⁹ William E. Odom, "Russia's Several Seats at the Table," *International Affairs*, vol.74, no.4 (October 1998), 819.

Moreover, to ensure positive movement toward a market-driven economy, the government needs to make unpopular decisions that may also destabilize the situation in Russia. An analysis of the current economic situation suggests that enduring Russian economic prosperity is highly improbable in the next decade or two, owing to the country's dependence on oil and natural gas sales; and this in turn makes Russia's future unpredictable.

According to Odom, Russian imperialism may not be a major problem today, but history shows us that "liberalism in Russia prospers only after major defeats, and once the regime has regained its self-confidence and achieved détente with the West, Russia returns to domestic repression and imperialism."³⁰ This was true with Alexander I's and Alexander II's reforms after defeat in wars—Austerlitz in 1805 and the Crimean War in 1856. The next "reforming impulse" in Russia came with its defeat in the war with Japan and a revolution at home in 1905. Another impulse for liberal reforms came after state power disintegration in 1917. The last impulse came after Russia's exhaustion in the Afghanistan war and the arms race with the United States. The current situation is different in only one way. In Odom's words, "most of the empire... is gone. The imperial impulse, however, is not gone. It lacks only effective military power to reconquer its lost territories."³¹

In view of uncertainties in Russia's political and economic spheres, Lithuanian politicians and military planners believe that Lithuania's security could be challenged by the instability within the former Soviet Union (FSU) and by the authoritarianism and nationalism expressed within certain political parties and movements in Russia. Such uncertainties about Russia's future raise the question of whether Russia has sufficient military power to pose a threat.

b. Military Threat

The most serious threat is a possible attack by Russia against Lithuania or all the Baltic States. Though this threat is not necessarily imminent, the severity of its consequences makes it a serious consideration in any assessment of Lithuanian security. The Russian-speaking minority and the Kaliningrad issues could be a basis for

³⁰ Odom, "Russia's Several Seats at the Table," 820.

³¹ Ibid., 820.

aggression; and Russia has the military ability to intervene, especially after the *de facto* military reintegration of Belarus with Russia, and the fortification of garrisons in the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad, including the deployment of 18 nuclear-armed SS21 missiles.³²

As suggested above, two questions, if mismanaged, could lead to destabilization in the Baltic region or under certain conditions could be the basis for Russian intervention: the Russian-speaking minority and/or instability in Kaliningrad.

(1) The Russian-Speaking Minority. Following World War II, the Baltic States were subjected to the same forced industrialization program inflicted on all Soviet republics. According to Perry, Sweeney and Winner, A shortage of workers in the heavy-industry sector necessitated a large-scale importation of labor into the Baltic States.... Most of the imported labor was Russian, although many Ukrainians, Jews, and Belarusians immigrated as well. The Baltics' comparatively mild climate and higher living standards (even under Soviet rule) also made the region a destination for many Soviet military retirees.³³

The Russian-speaking minority in Lithuania constitutes 11 percent of the total population.³⁴ There is no present threat of this minority becoming a problem within Lithuania, but in the long run exploiting this issue from outside is possible, particularly from Russia. Although the withdrawal of Russian forces from the Baltic States in 1994 helped to release tensions with Moscow over the minority question, the issue has never completely faded. In part, this is because of the strong rhetoric adopted in many cases by parties from across the Russian political spectrum. After nationalist and communist forces initiated such attacks, democratic forces also adopted a hard-line position on the status of ethnic Russians in the Baltic States.³⁵ The Russian political parties' attacks on the Baltic States made it difficult for Russian leaders to engage in dialogue with their Baltic counterparts. This was evident in the reluctance of President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister Victor Chernomirdin to visit the Baltic States in 1996.

³² Kramer, "NATO, The Baltic States and Russia: A Framework for Sustainable Enlargement," 734.

³³ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 20.

³⁴ "Lithuania, Society," *Lithuanian Information Resource*, available at <http://lupinfo.com/coutry-guide-study/lithuania12.html> (23 April 2003).

³⁵ Kramer, "NATO, The Baltic States and Russia: A Framework for Sustainable Enlargement," 734.

Visits by high-ranking Russian state and government leaders to the Baltic States still occur less frequently than to other former Soviet republics.³⁶

Moreover, we should not dismiss the fact that the security services are still powerful and have immense influence domestically, which was shown during the hostage operation in Moscow in October 2002 when 129 people died.³⁷ These services could artificially create a situation of unrest among Russian-speaking minorities, providing the Russian government a pretext to use military force for direct aggression. Therefore NATO politicians and military planners should take into account the fact that these options could be exploited to commit acts of aggression.

(2) Kaliningrad. Another danger is that negative political developments in Russia could increase tensions over the Kaliningrad district and could increase Moscow's desire to exploit the Kaliningrad issue as a pressure point in Russia's relations with Lithuania. Kaliningrad could be a major source of tension between Russia and Lithuania, as a consequence of instability in the oblast and as a consequence of Russia's doubts about its ability to retain the exclave in the long term.

Kaliningrad's geographic separation, its history of changing ownership, and Russia's current weakened economic and military power raise the fear of losing control over the oblast. There is a desire among some Kaliningrad leaders for greater autonomy. Moscow's excessive bureaucratic control has become a frequent theme in the statements of oblast officials. They have complained that all decisions regarding the economy are made by bureaucrats in Moscow, not consumers or businesses based in the oblast. The seriousness of the current economic situation is heightened by the oblast's inability to pay for food supplies and heating oil. Kaliningrad's bleak economic prospects also represent a separate challenge to stability in the region. Kaliningrad could become a major source for illegal immigration and organized crime activity. The exclave has already earned a reputation as a key narcotics trafficking node and is also renowned for prostitution.³⁸

³⁶ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 28.

³⁷ "Hostages sue Moscow for Millions," BBC News (25 November 2002), available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2512793.stm> (15 March 2004).

³⁸ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 48.

Another of Moscow's concerns is the weak historical claim that Russia has to territory that was for centuries held at various times by Germany (East Prussia), Lithuania (Karaliauchius), and Poland (Krolewicz).³⁹ That these countries have much stronger historical relationships to the exclave is a point of concern for Russia. Moscow can offer the oblast no realistic prospects for further economic development in the long run, while the EU could economically surpass the exclave, leaving it at a severe disadvantage in economic relations with its neighbors. At the same time, Russia fears that an economically successful Kaliningrad would secede from the federation.

The long-term question of Russian military transit to Kaliningrad across Lithuanian territory could also be used to complicate relations between the two states. The matter has been resolved on an informal basis, with Lithuania permitting Russian troops to cross its territory with certain restrictions. For example, troops can only move by rail; prior notification is required; and soldiers must ride separately from their weapons. The problem here is that Russia could attempt to revise the current agreement and revive its demand for a guaranteed transit corridor across Lithuania territory at some time in the future. Various problems that could be destabilizing for Kaliningrad will arise after Lithuania joins the EU. Lithuania will have to solve problems such as border crossing rights (at present only Kaliningrad oblast residents can cross the border without a visa); the transit of Russia's commercial goods and military forces and equipment; the protection of Lithuanian investments in Kaliningrad; and finally the civil and political rights of 200,000 ethnic Lithuanians in Kaliningrad.⁴⁰ The likelihood of an unstable situation in Kaliningrad leading to Russian aggression is quite low, but such a situation could be very dangerous for Lithuania.

(3) Military Capabilities. Asking if Russia has the capabilities to conduct an intervention is reasonable. There are enough data to examine the Russian army's capacity for aggression. The level of military threat in the region has dropped dramatically since the end of the Cold War, but Lithuanians are concerned about Russia's military capabilities and their possible rejuvenation in the long term. In view of Russia's large number of forces in the Kaliningrad oblast and the Leningrad Military District

³⁹ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 57.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 32-39.

(MD), the threat to Lithuania appears quite real. According to Perry, Sweeney and Winner, “Russia has approximately 14,500 ground troops and 790 main battle tanks (MBTs) in Kaliningrad and another 49,000 troops and 980 MBTs in the Leningrad MD.” This is compared to 12,000 Lithuanian troops or about 21,000 troops in all the Baltic States. Moreover, the Baltic States do not have armored forces and combat aircraft, while Russia has a large amount of SU-25s, SU-27s and MIG-31s based throughout the Leningrad MD and Kaliningrad oblast.⁴¹

Without doubt, such numerical analysis does not reveal the real strength of Russia’s forces. Since the end of the Cold War, Russia’s armed forces have deteriorated and its military capabilities have significantly decreased. The difficult current financial situation has also created funding shortfalls for military programs. The Army even lacks money for training and equipment maintenance. Russian pilots receive only one-fourth of flight time required to keep skills at minimum levels. Inspections in conjunction with the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe treaty have revealed extremely low levels of equipment maintenance, especially in Kaliningrad. The situation of the Baltic Fleet has also declined. The Baltic Fleet has lost half of its main bases, including its largest facility in Liepaja (Latvia) and other main bases in Estonia and Poland. Its personnel have been cut by over fifty thousand, including six thousand officers. Moreover, fleet personnel suffer from payment delays and housing shortages. According to some reports, the Baltic Fleet faced a real prospect of food shortages in 1998.⁴²

From this perspective, Russian forces in the region may be of poor quality, but they still could pose a real threat to Lithuania and the whole Baltic region if Russia’s political orientation changed quickly. In worst-case scenarios, as some military analysts have pointed out, Russia could intervene in one or more of the Baltic States while the West was involved in another crisis. Given strong anti-Western sentiments and overall dissatisfaction, the Russian population (in the Kaliningrad case) might accept more aggressive policies toward Lithuania. Russia’s intelligence and security services,

⁴¹ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 33.

⁴² Ibid., 40-45.

the successor organizations to the KGB, may still have the ability to manipulate events in Lithuania in order to create a pretext for intervention.

However, to draw a conclusion about the possible intervention, other issues must be considered. First, how many troops would be needed to conduct such an operation? Taking into account the fact that 40,000 troops failed in their campaign in Chechnya from 1994 to 1996, Perry, Sweeney and Winner have estimated that at least 150,000 troops would be required to recapture and occupy the Baltic States. It is plausible, in their view, that the current troops in the Kaliningrad oblast and Leningrad MD could be enough to occupy one of the Baltic States, but more troops would be needed to reinforce the Kaliningrad and Belarusian border with Poland against NATO assistance. According to Perry, Sweeney and Winner, about one fifth of Russia's armed forces might be needed for such an operation. Moreover, they have concluded, this operation would require control of access to the Baltic Sea, a task that is beyond the Baltic Fleet's capabilities.⁴³ Furthermore, it is uncertain whether Russia would risk its relations with the European Union and the United States by invading an EU member and NATO ally. According to military analysts, Russia is probably still too weak economically and militarily to run such a great risk by intervening in the Baltic States.⁴⁴

In short, Russian military intervention in Lithuania in the next decade is improbable. However, the future of post-Soviet Russia is still unclear, and it would be premature and imprudent to declare that there is no possibility that Russia could revert to being an authoritarian and hostile state. Obviously, a democratic Russia is still far off in the future. Therefore it would be very dangerous for Lithuania not to take measures to ensure its security, based on the unfounded assumption that Russia has become a democratic state; the cost of such an analytical error could be very high. In view of Lithuania's relatively small economic and military capabilities and its security concerns, it is reasonable to define Lithuania as a "not greedy/potentially insecure" state, in accordance with Charles Glaser's definition discussed in Chapter I.

⁴³ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 46.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 45-46.

2. Russia's Concerns

At this point, it is useful to look at Russia's main concerns. It will help to draw a clearer picture of Russia and to understand why many Russians see Lithuania as more anti-East than pro-West. Russia's main concerns are political, economic and military.

a. Political Concerns

Political concerns include domestic and great-power considerations. First, it is clear that the Baltic region and Lithuania in particular remain important issues for Russian politicians. Despite the diverse platforms and views of Russian political parties on various issues they all agree on one point – the need to protect Russian minorities abroad. Even though Russian politicians have been strong on rhetoric but weak on concrete action, protection of Russian minorities abroad has served as a unifying factor of diverse political forces. For example, one might consider the reaction to the Riga pensioners' demonstration in March 1998, when even the appearance of injustice against ethnic Russians became a very good foundation for agreement among different political leaders such as Chernomirdin, Luzhkov, Zirinovskiy, Zyuganov, and Yeltsin.⁴⁵ Russian leaders have used the issue of ethnic Russian minorities abroad for political purposes. Supporting oppressed ethnic Russians provides a cover for Russian politicians who seek to distract public attention from more serious problems.⁴⁶

Another political concern is Russia's desire to remain a great power. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the loss not only of huge amounts of territory but more importantly of superpower status have influenced Russian politicians and security thinkers, leaving a deep psychological mark. After an initial period of increased cooperation with the West, in 1996 Russia adopted a new course. During Primakov's time as foreign minister, Russia tried to enhance its position in world diplomatic affairs. Russia took steps to improve its relations with France, Germany, Japan and China as part of its policy to reestablish Moscow as an important actor in world affairs. Russia's insistence on full membership in the G-8 should be seen in the same perspective. The trilateral summit in Moscow in March 1998 between Yeltsin, then-Chancellor Helmut

⁴⁵ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 54.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 29, 59.

Kohl of Germany, and French President Jacques Chirac could be seen as an attempt to enhance Russia's prominence in European diplomacy while at the same time showing that the United States and the United Kingdom were not needed.⁴⁷

In the late 1990s, Russia continuously demonstrated that it regards the Baltic States as falling within its sphere of interests. The latter half of 1997 was marked by a number of initiatives and policy statements regarding the Baltic States. Russia offered unilateral security guarantees and confidence-building measures at Vilnius in September. In October 1997, Yeltsin announced in Stockholm unilateral force cuts of about 40 percent in northwest Russia as a sign of Moscow's renewed attention to the Baltic States and the whole region.⁴⁸ The increased importance of the Baltic States in U.S. foreign policy and the signing of the U.S.-Baltic charter in January 1998 have sparked Russia's interest in the Baltic region, which can be viewed as an attempt to keep pace with the United States as a great power and to maintain its influence in the Baltic region and particularly in the Baltic States. Russia's desire to reassert itself as a great power will continue to be an important factor in its policy toward the Baltic States and Lithuania in particular.

b. Military Concerns

Second, the most sensitive issues are the security concerns of the Russia military about developments in the Baltic region. These concerns can be divided into two categories: operational, concerning the impact of the Baltic States' membership in NATO; and strategic, related to early warning and nuclear issues between Russia and the United States.

The operational concerns reflect the importance of the Baltic region as an avenue for land, air and naval operations. Throughout history the territory of the Baltic States has been the corridor for ground force movements to and from northwest Russia. This fact was underscored by the extensive battles between German and Soviet forces in the Baltic region during both world wars. From a Russian perspective, two very important strategic areas—Moscow and the Leningrad Military District, with its huge nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine facilities—are left unprotected from an

⁴⁷ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 61.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 70.

aggressor advancing from the Baltic Sea.⁴⁹ Therefore, given the historical importance of the Baltic States' territory and Russia's traditional emphasis on the buffer effect and on controlling its periphery in order to meet and fight an aggressor as far from the center as possible, the Baltic States' membership in NATO is viewed in a negative light by Russian defense planners. Moreover, as the Russian Ambassador to NATO, General Konstantin Totskiy, emphasized, there is concern about a potential for increased NATO deployments. There are no force deployment limitations in the Baltic States under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and this territory could become an "arms control-free zone."⁵⁰

As military analysts have noted, the most damaging element of the loss of Baltic territory is that it significantly limits Russia's ability to provide air defense over the Baltic Sea. This also left Russia more vulnerable to airborne reconnaissance and surveillance after Lithuania agreed to lend its airfields to support NATO reconnaissance flights. According to Perry, Sweeney and Winner,

Russian concerns over its inability to dominate Baltic airspace are reflected in the renewed attention given to the air-defense forces in Kaliningrad. Units on the ground were among the first to be outfitted with the S-300 air-defense system, considered roughly the Russian equivalent of *Patriot*, and a training range for S-300 live-fire tests has been established in Kaliningrad near Cape Taran. The housing situation in the air-defense forces is also considered to be better than in other units in the oblast.⁵¹

Kaliningrad cannot compensate for the loss of air-defense facilities in the Baltic States, but the Russians are determined to strengthen Kaliningrad as a forward air-defense post bordering NATO territory.

The last set of concerns involves nuclear planning and strategic early warning in relations between Russia and the United States. This issue is quite sensitive for two reasons. First, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia lost some early-warning radars. As pointed out by Perry, Sweeney and Winner,

⁴⁹ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 63-65.

⁵⁰ Konstantin Totskiy Interview, NATO Review, Winter 2003, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2003issue3/English.interview.html> (12 January 2004).

⁵¹ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 64; italics in the original.

The partially completed LPAR [large phased-array radar] at Skrunda in Latvia was destroyed, by mutual agreement with Russia, in 1995. Aside from LPARs, eleven older *Hen House* radars form the main component of Russia's early-warning radars.⁵²

Though Defense Minister Sergeyev has argued that Russia will be able to compensate for the loss of Skrunda with space-based systems until the new Baranovichi site in Belarussia is fully operational, some analysts note that disadvantages exist in both the land-based and space-based early-warning systems.⁵³

Second, the NATO membership of the Baltic States would raise Russian concerns over the vulnerability of Russia itself to NATO tactical nuclear weapons. During the debate over the first post-Cold War round of NATO enlargement Defense Minister Igor Rodionov noted that “the addition of Polish territory would theoretically allow NATO dual-capable aircraft (DCA) to deliver tactical nuclear weapons as far east as Bryansk, Smolensk, and Kursk.”⁵⁴ From a Russian perspective, the NATO membership of the Baltic States would bring the Alliance closer to Russian territory, making tactical weapons more strategically significant. Russian observers have expressed such concerns even though the NATO-Russian Founding Act includes the following statement:

The member States of NATO reiterate that they have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, nor any need to change any aspect of NATO's nuclear posture or nuclear policy—and do not foresee any future need to do so.⁵⁵

Overall NATO's enlargement is seen in Russia as a Western policy contrary to Russian interests. According to Nadia Arbatova, “NATO's expansion to almost a three-fold superiority over Russia, closer to Russian borders without any threat

⁵² Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 66; italics in the original.

⁵³ Ibid., 66.

⁵⁴ Igor Rodionov quoted in indirect discourse in Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 68.

⁵⁵ Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, an appendix in David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 320.

from Russia, was envisaged by the majority of Russia's political and strategic elite as much more illustrative evidence of intentions than official NATO declarations."⁵⁶

c. Economic Concerns

Finally, Russia has economic interests in the Baltic States. These countries are attractive to Russia because of their geographic position. They have served as a "bridge" for transferring Russia's goods to Europe and further to the West. Historically Baltic ports have been the main trade route for Russian goods shipped by sea. Baltic ports are ice-free all year, and this makes them attractive and advantageous for Russia. A significant portion of Russia's oil and natural gas exports, about 11 to 12 percent, is distributed via Baltic ports. Another Russian economic concern is that Lithuania plays a significant role in connecting the Kaliningrad district with Russia. More than 40% of transit to Kaliningrad goes through Lithuania.⁵⁷ However, the membership of the Baltic States in the EU will transform disputes and crises between Russia and any Baltic State into disputes between Moscow and Brussels. This circumstance may greatly reduce Russia's ability to push its policy in the region.

At this point, it is possible to determine whether and to what extent Russia's policy is driven by opportunity and/or by needs. As this research has shown, Russia has some legitimate concerns, including security, but at the same time Russia may seek to enhance its great-power status and dominate the Baltic States in political, economic, and military terms. Domestic concerns about economic and security needs could be used as an opportunity to commit aggression. Military concerns may look like needs, but if one's own security is improved by diminishing another's security, these concerns are in fact motivated by opportunity. In the current difficult economic situation in Russia, economic concerns are probably driven by genuine needs. The great power concerns are, however, clearly driven by opportunistic motives. This analysis concludes that Russia's concerns are probably driven by both needs and opportunity. Therefore it is reasonable to label Russia a "greedy/potentially non-secure" state, in terms of the definitions set forth in Chapter I.

⁵⁶ Nadia Aleksandrova Arbatova, "Russia and NATO: A Russian View," in Rob de Wijk, Bram Boxhoorn, and Niklaas Hoekstra, eds., *NATO After Kosovo* (The Hague: The Netherlands Atlantic Association, Netherlands Institute of International Relations "Clingendael," and the Royal Netherlands Military Academy, 2000), 47.

⁵⁷ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 71.

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III. DETERRENCE TO MEET LITHUANIA'S SECURITY NEEDS

Lithuania's position in the international security system is at its "best over the past decade", and the best way to maintain this position is through the nation's membership in the European Union (EU) and NATO, according to the National Security Strategy adopted at the parliament's session on 28 May 2002. "The Republic of Lithuania now sees no direct military threat for its national security, [and] therefore, [it] does not consider any foreign country its enemy." The main security planners in Vilnius, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National Defense (MND), agree that the possibility of any organized external military threat to Lithuania over the next several years is relatively low. But at the same time "the main task for the near future is to achieve membership of NATO."⁵⁸ Full integration into the Alliance is viewed by the political leadership as the most important condition for Lithuanian security and independence in the long term. Moreover, according to the White Paper on defense, "The Lithuanian national defence system shall be directed towards the development of military forces for state defence that are interoperable with NATO or as its component."⁵⁹

It is obvious that Lithuanian membership in NATO could play a role as a deterrent to Russian aggression or coercion in the short and long terms. The main reason for this membership, as it was concluded in the previous chapter, is that there is lingering concern with regard to potential instability in Russia, and its possible spillover effect on Lithuania. This concern was confirmed by a major public opinion survey on security issues, conducted in March 1998 on behalf of NATO's Office of Information and the Press and the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry. According to this survey, the second most important threat to Lithuania's security after crime and corruption (30.3%) was instability in Russia (21.7%). Moreover, 69 percent of Lithuania's population think that their security is not sufficiently protected; therefore integration with the West via NATO and

⁵⁸ "Lithuanian Approves Security Strategy," Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania to the United States of America: Press and Public, available at <http://www.ltembassyus.org/press/Newsfiles/2002/Newsfiles20020603.html> (12 March 2003).

⁵⁹ *White Paper: Lithuanian Defense Policy* (Vilnius, Lithuania: Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Lithuania, July 2002), 11.

the EU is the only route to domestic and regional stability.⁶⁰ Lithuanians have real concerns about Russia, and these concerns are not groundless. NATO membership offers Lithuania the possibility of deterrence to meet its concerns, but deterrence policies also have some limitations. Despite difficulties of predicting the outcome of deterrence efforts, some tentative conclusions can be drawn in view of the main deterrence theories and current trends in international politics and in Lithuanian-Russian relations in particular.

A. EVALUATING SUCCESS OF DETERRENCE

Assuming that there is a possibility of direct aggression, it is prudent to attempt to prevent it through deterrence in order to ensure Lithuania's security. Lithuania's politicians see NATO and a strong defense system as tools of deterrence. The question is how to make it credible and to what extent deterrence may be effective.

According to deterrence theory, the success of a deterrence strategy depends on several factors, including the defender's capabilities and the strength of his resolve. Other relevant factors include strategic, domestic and psychological circumstances. Because of its limited scope, this paper concentrates on the following variables: on the defender's side, resolve and the capabilities to deter the opponent; on the adversary's side, strategic vulnerabilities and domestic political factors.

1. Capability of Defender

There is no question that NATO has military capabilities that might deter Russia, especially taking into account Russia's military weaknesses discussed in the previous chapter. Moreover, some Russian observers hold that NATO's expansion has significantly improved its strategic position. According to Alexei Arbatov, the traditional East-West balance of conventional forces has changed in favor of NATO armed forces to an almost three-fold superiority compared to Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) armed forces. In comparison with the USSR's position from the late 1940s to the late 1990s, Moscow's present military power has been drawn back 1,500 kilometers from the center of Europe. The Moscow military district has turned from the deep rear area into the forward edge of Russian defense, while the operational depth of NATO in Europe has

⁶⁰ Rolandas Kacinskas, "Lithuanian Public View on National Security in a Changing Environment," available at <http://www.lfpr.lt.982/8.doc> (12 March 2004).

increased by some 15 to 20 percent.⁶¹ Although “Russia’s military power will still remain substantially constrained by the country’s weak economy and adverse demographic and health trends,” it is prudent to keep NATO capable of conducting Article 5 missions.⁶²

Lithuania’s capabilities offer a more complicated picture. The present capability of the Lithuanian armed forces to defend the nation is limited. The one active, ready motorized infantry brigade is judged by analysts as being capable of delaying a division-size ground attack for a short period of time along one major avenue, or defending one major city against such an attack for a brief time. Furthermore, Lithuania’s ground forces have no advanced equipment or weapons such as anti-tank, anti-aircraft, and transport systems. The capabilities of the Lithuanian Navy and Air Forces are far from what would be required to deter Russia. Moreover, a nation-wide mobilization would likely raise no more than half the total required for defense, and half of them would be inadequately armed and trained. Finally, the National Defense Voluntary Force (NDVF) has to be well-integrated with the regular forces. Therefore Lithuania is now pursuing two major objectives in its long-term defense plan:

- Building a flexible self-defense force able to implement the nation’s total defense concept; and
- Achieving service-wide interoperability with NATO forces.⁶³

The importance of Lithuanian army capabilities has two aspects. First, to be accepted in NATO and enjoy its defense umbrella, Lithuania had to ensure that its Armed Forces could meet certain requirements. According to NATO’s Membership Action Plan (MAP), the candidate states need to meet training requirements to ensure their ability to cooperate fully with NATO (including fluency in NATO’s working languages and familiarity with its operational concepts); achieve comparable management procedures and standards (including an administrative capacity for logistics, functional defense planning, budgeting and programming and personnel management); complete the restructuring of the armed forces (including increasing the proportion of non-commissioned officers and reducing the average age of troops); enhance military

⁶¹ Alexei Arbatov, “The Emerging Shape of Post-Cold War European Security,” *Europa-parliament*, no.1, 1995, p.11.

⁶² William E. Odom, “Realism about Russia,” *The National Interest*, no.65 (Fall 2001), 63.

⁶³ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 111-115.

capabilities (including combat, air-defense, logistics, rapid reaction forces and infrastructure); modernize and improve equipment (including naval, air forces, air surveillance and communications); establish the legal framework for the protection of confidential information; adapt the constitution in order to respond when necessary to an invocation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty; and adopt documents specifying a new national security strategy, defense strategy, military strategy, civil defense, and military long-term development and equipment plans for supporting the new Strategic Concept of the Atlantic Alliance.⁶⁴

Second, in the case of a requirement for direct immediate deterrence (or defense), even as a NATO member, Lithuania could not expect to receive military assistance quickly. The arrival time of allied forces could vary from several days to weeks. Lithuania would have to defend its territory for some period of time using its own armed forces. In theory, it would be possible to reinforce Lithuania's defense on major avenues of assault, if warning of an attack were received at an early enough point. Though it is obvious that Lithuanian forces could not withstand an enemy assault for an indefinite time, the MND hopes that the fully mobilized reserve with small regular forces and with district-based units of the NDVF would be able to fend off defeat pending the arrival of external assistance.⁶⁵

At this point, taking into consideration the current situation and probable future circumstances, NATO's capability to deter Russian aggression or coercion is probably sufficient, but there might be weakness in a case requiring extended immediate deterrence. Therefore Lithuania, as a member of NATO, should not miss any opportunity to improve its armed forces and be prepared for self-defense as well as for defense with NATO assistance.

2. Credibility of Defender's Resolve

The issue of credibility is more complicated. Credibility depends on the ability to send persuasive signals of the defender's resolve to use force. It also depends upon the bargaining strategy that a defender employs.⁶⁶ The credibility of Lithuania's resolve

⁶⁴ Terry Terriff, Stuart Croft, Elke Krahmann, Mark Webber, and Jolyon Howorth, "One in, All in? NATO's next Enlargement," *International Affairs*, vol.78-4 (October 2002), 726-727.

⁶⁵ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 112-114.

⁶⁶ Huth, *Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Debates*, 31.

would be high because of the importance of the issues at stake in the case of a Russian intervention that might lead to tremendous human and other losses—including an end of the nation's independence. However, Lithuania's credibility could be a weak point because it might not be able to send persuasive signals, owing to a desire not to raise tensions with Russia; and it could not match Russia's strength in the bargaining process. NATO members are bound by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty to defend a threatened ally, but the nature of their action in support of their commitment may vary from country to country depending on their domestic policy preferences.

No doubt, the commitment of the United States is strong. It refused to acknowledge the Soviet Union's annexation of the Baltic States, and it continues to support the Baltic States in the military sphere. On 16 January 1998, a Charter of Partnership among the United State and Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia was signed.⁶⁷ For FY 2003 the U.S. allocated approximately \$1.5 million in Foreign Military Founding (FMF) funds and in International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds for Lithuania.⁶⁸ The United States remains the main supporter of the Baltic States in the process of their integration into NATO.

At this point, it appears that the credibility of NATO is probably high enough to deter Russian aggression or coercion, but in case of the United States' withdrawal from Europe (an unlikely event in the foreseeable future) it could be significantly weakened, making deterrence less credible. Lithuania's ability to pursue policies to ensure its security alone would be insufficient in such circumstances.

3. Strategic Vulnerability of Opponent

Another key variable determining outcomes in tests of deterrence strategies is strategic vulnerability. According to Stein, this vulnerability could be caused by changes in the balance of military capabilities that work against a challenger (an unfavorable shift in the balance of power) or by the "security dilemma." In the latter case, "behavior perceived by adversaries as threatening and aggressive is a defensive response to an

⁶⁷ Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 237.

⁶⁸ "Foreign Military Training and DoD Engagement Activities of Interests: Joint Report to Congress," (Washington: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, May 2003), available at [http://www.fas.org/asmp/campaigns/training/FMTR%202003/III_%20Foreign%20Policy%](http://www.fas.org/asmp/campaigns/training/FMTR%202003/III_%20Foreign%20Policy%20) (8 April 2004).

inhospitable strategic environment.”⁶⁹ The first case is less probable with Russia in the future because it has already experienced this kind of decline without dangerous disturbance. In the second case, it is posited that under conditions of the security dilemma, an insecure government is likely to exaggerate the hostility of an adversary. In other words, defensive actions intended to protect the Baltic States as NATO members might be misunderstood by Russia as actions directed against its security interests.

Two events—NATO’s July 1997 enlargement decision and NATO’s March-June 1999 air campaign in the Kosovo conflict—confirm the possibility that Russians might exaggerate their security concerns. According to Nadia Arbatova, NATO’s July 1997 Madrid decision to expand had a very negative impact on the Russian political elite’s security perceptions and consequently on Russian foreign and security policy. NATO is perceived in Russia as an alliance designed as a defense against Russia. In the NATO-Russia Founding Act, the NATO Allies made the following commitments:

The member States of NATO reiterate that they have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, nor any need to change any aspect of NATO’s nuclear posture or nuclear policy—and do not foresee any future need to do so.... NATO reiterates that in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defense and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces.⁷⁰

The fact that these were political commitments and not legally binding obligations reinforced Russia’s suspicions about NATO’s motives in enlargement and led to exaggerated security concerns in Russia. Moreover, after NATO’s air strikes in the Kosovo conflict in 1999, the NATO bloc was again considered the main potential enemy and the major threat to Russia.⁷¹ It seems that Russia’s new military strategy was formed

⁶⁹ Janice Gross Stein, “Deterrence and Reassurance,” in Philip E. Tetlock, Jo L. Husbands, Robert Jervis, Paul S. Stern and Charles Tilly, eds., *Behavior, Society, and Nuclear War* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 17.

⁷⁰ Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, 27 May 1997, an appendix in David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance’s New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 320-321.

⁷¹ Nadia Aleksandrova Arbatova, “Russia and NATO: A Russian View,” in Rob de Wijk, Bram Boxhoorn, and Niklaas Hoekstra, eds., *NATO After Kosovo* (The Hague, The Netherlands Atlantic Association, Netherlands Institute of International Relations “Clingendael,” and the Royal Netherlands Military Academy, 2000), 55, 58.

according to this assessment; this can be confirmed by recently conducted military exercises that included simulated nuclear strikes against NATO countries.⁷²

In short, strategic vulnerability can affect perceptions, with implications for the effectiveness of deterrence strategies. However, it is important to take into consideration recent positive trends in Russian foreign policy—closer relations with NATO and a more constructive dialogue with West. The negative effect of strategic vulnerability may be diminished if this rapprochement continues.

4. Domestic Politics

Domestic political factors may have an influence on the outcome of attempts to employ deterrence strategies because shifts in the balance of domestic political power may lead to changes in policy. Moderates prefer defensive strategies, seek more cooperative policies, and employ unilateral restraints, arms control and diplomacy in maintaining good relations with neighbors. Hard-liners rely more on competitive foreign policies.⁷³ Russia's current policy suggests that moderates are influential at present. Under such conditions hardliners may gain influence by arguing that the defenders' supposedly "threatening" policies are caused by their own non-assertive policies. For example, Russia's excessive expressions of concern about NATO enlargement were and still are mainly promoted by domestic forces seeking political advantages.

According to David Yost, NATO's intervention in Kosovo "stimulated the already powerful anti-Western currents in Russian politics."⁷⁴ Furthermore, according to Alexei Arbatov, within Russian security organizations and the Duma "serious discussions took place concerning [potential] military conflict with NATO."⁷⁵

Some Russian analysts and politicians see NATO enlargement and the Alliance's military intervention in the Kosovo conflict as evidence of the US or even German

⁷² Igor Korotchenko, "Moscow Rehearses a Nuclear Strike on the U.S.," *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, no. 8 (14 May 2003), available at <http://www.cdi.org/russia/257-8-pr.cfm> (12 March 2004).

⁷³ Charles L. Glaser, "Political Consequences of Military Strategy: Expanding and Refining the Spiral and Deterrence Models," *World Politics* 44 (July 1992), 520-523.

⁷⁴ David S. Yost, "NATO's Contributions to Conflict Management," in Chester A Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds., *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), 595.

⁷⁵ Alexie G. Arbatov, *The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned from Kosovo and Chechnia*, Marshall Center Paper no.2 (Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany; George C. Marshall Center, July 2000), 8-9.

assertiveness. In the eyes of Russian observers, “the United States is seen to be taking advantage of Russia’s weakness to impose an American-designed European security order.”⁷⁶ According to Anton Surikov, a radical Russian nationalist, NATO enlargement is “an attempt by Germany to resume its expansion in the eastern and south-eastern directions.” In Anton Surikov’s view, the only way to stop this expansion is “restraining NATO with nuclear weapons” deployments in various places, including Kaliningrad, and on ships in the Baltic Sea. Moreover, Surikov wrote, “nobody intends to fight with Russia for the Baltic countries,” owing in part to Russia’s nuclear forces, “one of the few convincing arguments for the West.”⁷⁷ However, not only radical nationalists have such ideas. Vladimir Lukin, a mainstream Russian politician, expressed a similar idea regarding NATO’s expansion:

If the blind egoism of the shortsighted politicians to the west of our borders prevails we will resort to the means we still have in our hands. These are means of some kind of desperation, but effective nonetheless.⁷⁸

NATO’s military intervention in Yugoslavia seriously strengthened anti-Western hardliners in Moscow and consequently triggered negative consequences. It “produced the most traumatic impact on Russia’s official and unofficial attitudes towards the Alliance.”⁷⁹ Moscow’s negative reaction to NATO’s actions was expressed by suspending certain elements of dialogue and cooperation with the Alliance. Despite the renewal of improved relations with NATO in early 2000, Russia’s new military doctrine in April 2000 confirmed a negative view of the Alliance’s military posture, NATO’s enlargement, and the air strikes in the Kosovo conflict. Furthermore, NATO’s intervention in the Kosovo conflict in 1999 not only strengthened nationalist and communist political forces in Russia, but “also aroused anti-Western political forces” in

⁷⁶ David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance’s New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 133.

⁷⁷ Anton Surikov, Defense Research Institute, “Special institute staff Suggests Russia Oppose NATO and the USA,” October 1995, ADVAB 1017 (Sandhurst, England: Conflict Studies Research Center, Royal Military Academy, April 1996), 3, 5-7. This is a translation of the widely discussed article in *Segodnya* on October 20, 1995.

⁷⁸ Lukin in *FBIS/Central Eurasia, Daily Report*, May 12, 1995, 23.

⁷⁹ Anatol Lieven and Dmitri Trenin, *Ambivalent Neighbors: The EU, NATO and the Price of Membership* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), 279.

Belarus, Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine.⁸⁰ According to Dmitri Glinski-Vassiliev, “NATO expansion was seen negatively not just by nationalists, but often more so by democrats and Westernisers.⁸¹ According to Nadia Arbatova, “As for Russian democrats... who contributed personally to the process of democratization of the USSR and Eastern Europe, they now have a bitter feeling of having been betrayed by their former political allies in the United States, Western and Central Europe.”⁸²

One more factor should be mentioned here before drawing conclusions about the importance of domestic politics. Russia’s foreign policy is highly dependent on one person—the president. Despite the important role of the Duma in domestic politics, under Vladimir Putin’s rule the Duma’s influence over foreign policy has weakened. This weak influence can be seen as positive because, despite the strong opposition to better relations with the West expressed in the Duma, Russia’s president has been able to pursue more cooperative policies toward the West. Of course, such strong reliance on one-man rule could have a negative effect—the election of a new president could lead to dramatic changes in Russian policy toward NATO and the West.

This evidence shows how important domestic forces are in influencing the country’s foreign and security policies. In some circumstances NATO’s deterrence strategies might have the unintended result of shifting the balance of power toward hard-liners who favor competitive policies instead of cooperation; this might increase tensions between NATO and Russia. Changes in the presidency could lead to unanticipated changes in foreign policy and thus cause huge disturbances in relations between Russia and the Alliance.

B. LIMITATIONS OF DETERRENCE

Any theory or policy of deterrence has its limitations. NATO’s deterrence in the case of Lithuania is no exception. Deterrence could fail because of technical problems, domestic or political constraints, and/or misperceptions.

First, deterrence could fail because of technical problems. According to Huth, in a case requiring extended-immediate deterrence, NATO, and particularly the United States,

⁸⁰ Yost, “NATO’s Contributions to Conflict Management,” 595.

⁸¹ Dmitri Glinski-Vassiliev, review of J. L. Black, *Russia Faces NATO Expansion, Survival*, vol. 43, no. 1 (Spring 2001), 178.

⁸² Arbatova, “Russia and NATO: A Russian View,” 56.

would face the problem of deploying its forces in large numbers beyond its borders. Mobilizing and transporting substantial forces could take a long time, but an extended-immediate deterrence situation would require a rapid movement of forces into position to repulse an attack. However, this argument could become less important if this issue was examined from another perspective. The example of West Berlin during the Cold War demonstrated that a strategically small area could be protected by strategies of deterrence. Therefore, it is plausible that a small group of NATO soldiers stationed in Lithuania could be sufficient to deter Russian aggression or coercion.

Second, deterrence could fail because of domestic or political constraints. In other words, owing to domestic considerations (their own security, economic or political interests), some countries could fail to express strong commitments to defend their ally. For example, one of the causes of World War I was Britain's weak commitment to the Triple Entente. According to John Orme, in the absence of consensus in the British government (the Cabinet remained divided over the crisis in Eastern Europe until the German invasion of Belgium), the British were unable to persuade the Germans of their resolve and to take decisive actions. Therefore the Germans thought that Britain was likely to remain neutral.⁸³ Another example is from World War II. In September 1939, when Germany attacked Poland, Warsaw's allies— Britain and France—failed to help Poland, even after their declaration of war against Germany. Although the Royal Navy engaged in operations against the German navy in the fall of 1939 and established a naval blockade of Germany, Britain and France did not “attack Germany on its western front.”

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A more recent example is Germany's reluctance to send an *Alphajet* squadron to Turkey in January 1991 as part of the forces whose purpose was to defend Turkey during the Gulf War. Although Germany sent its *Alphajet* squadron and air defense units within a month, the delay mainly stemmed from domestic concerns.⁸⁵ In addition, the successful deployment of allied forces could be undercut by domestic and political factors that

⁸³ John Orme, “Deterrence Failures: A Second Look,” *International Security*, vol.11, no.4 (Spring 1987), 107-108.

⁸⁴ Patrick Wright, *Tank: The Progress of a Monstrous Machine* (New York: Penguin Group Penguin Putnam Inc., 2000), 255.

⁸⁵ David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), 266.

might prevent leaders from implementing more effective policies.⁸⁶ Therefore it is reasonable to assume that under certain conditions the credibility of allies could be weak.

Finally, misperceptions may cause deterrence failure. According to Stein, individual psychological biases such as cognitive “schemata,” “scripts,” and “heuristics” may distort the process of attribution, estimation, and judgment.⁸⁷ These factors may negatively affect decision-making. Senior officers of Russia’s military who were educated during the Cold War may be inclined to exaggerate the offensive potential of NATO forces and to impute malicious intentions to the Alliance.

This can be explained by the strong influence of historical experiences. People tend to interpret events in terms of familiar patterns. This “worldview” helps decision-makers reach better judgments if the original conditions continue to be present, but makes it harder for them to operate under different conditions. According to Robert Jervis,

if an actor’s environment consistently presents him with certain problems and opportunities, he will be predisposed to see later situations as fitting the earlier pattern.... An actor’s contact with another on an important issue can establish so firm an image of him that it will be very hard to dislodge.... This means that images become over generalized as expectations established from behavior in one set of circumstances are carried over into quite different situations.... More generally, states that have been expansionist under one set of circumstances or leaders are likely to be seen as posing a continuing threat.⁸⁸

These psychological biases may prevail in Russia’s military, making misperceptions possible. This may worsen relations and escalate tensions. High-ranking Russian military and political officials still see NATO as a possible threat. However, considering Russia’s relative military weakness, at least for the upcoming decade, NATO’s efforts to promote cooperation, and the continuing retirement of the military leadership’s “old guard,” the probability of misperceptions may decline.

There may also be some other limitations to NATO’s strategies of deterrence. First, it is not clear how NATO may be affected by the European Union’s European Security and Defense Policy, and it is not clear how its military doctrine will change with

⁸⁶ Huth, *Deterrence and International Conflict*, 36.

⁸⁷ Stein, “Deterrence and Reassurance,” 20.

⁸⁸ Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 272–275.

the acceptance of new members. It is not clear whether and how NATO's defense doctrine will change with the membership of the Baltic States in NATO. Second, as with other such organizations, NATO membership implies obligations for the member states. States should follow certain rules and procedures accepted by all members. All member states participate in decision-making, but their influence will be a function of their contribution and their political weight. This is especially true for new members.

At this point, taking into consideration the current situation and probable future events, it appears that

- NATO's capability to deter Russia's aggression or coercion is probably sufficient, but there may be weakness in a case requiring extended-immediate deterrence;
- The credibility of NATO to pursue policies to ensure Lithuania's security is high, but in the event of U.S. withdrawal from Europe (an unlikely circumstance), it could be significantly weakened, making deterrence less credible;
- Deterrence strategies could fail because of technical problems, political constraints (in a case requiring extended immediate deterrence), or misperceptions (in some circumstances, the "threat" posed by NATO could be exaggerated by Russian leaders) and cognitive failures;
- In some circumstances NATO's policies of deterrence might shift the domestic balance of power in Russia toward hardliners, and as a result yield competitive foreign policies and increased tensions between Russia and NATO; and
- Shifts in domestic political forces (particularly involving the Duma and the president) could initiate dramatic changes in Russian foreign policy, causing deterrence failure.

Lithuania's membership in NATO gives it an opportunity to deal with its eastern neighbor on a more equal basis. NATO may be able to deter the threat of Russian aggression or coercion and provide assurance, in view of the uncertainty of future political and economic developments in Russia. NATO membership can assure Lithuanian security, while Lithuania is creating its armed forces and improving its whole

defense system as a contribution to the Alliance. NATO also can assure Lithuanian security in the long run, in the event that authoritarian rule returns in Russia. In order to compensate for the limitations of deterrence strategies and mitigate some potential negative impacts of deterrence policies, Lithuania should take the following measures:

- Improve its armed forces and be prepared for defense with NATO assistance as well as for self-defense contingencies; and
- Employ reassurance policies to mitigate the consequences of possible misperceptions and negative shifts in domestic power in Russia.

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IV. REASSURANCE AND COOPERATIVE POLICIES TO MITIGATE RUSSIA'S CONCERNS

As noted in the previous chapter, the majority of potential threats to Lithuanian security arise, directly or indirectly, from Russia. In the case of direct threats, including political or economic coercion or military aggression, Russia is the likely source of danger. Thus, strategies to deter possible threats are needed in the foreseeable future, but as previous analysis shows, deterrence strategies have their limitations and may fail. Many Russians view the membership of the Baltic States in NATO as threatening. Assuming that reassurance policies may help to mitigate hostility and mistrust, reducing fears and the possibility of misperceptions, it may be prudent in certain circumstances to employ more cooperative policies toward Russia.

However, it is important to know, given that Lithuania has become a member of NATO, to what extent reassurance and cooperative policies can ensure Lithuania's security while maintaining constructive relations with Russia. Two questions may help to answer the main one. First, to what extent have reassurance and cooperative policies toward Russia been successful? Second, what have been the limitations of reassurance and cooperative policies and under what conditions have they been successful?

The main factors examined in this chapter to assess the outcomes of reassurance and cooperative policies are Russia's motivations and domestic politics. Before beginning the analysis, it is useful to define some terms and basic assumptions that are used to assess specific cases. According to Janice Stein and Charles Glaser, if an adversary is driven largely by domestic political needs or strategic weaknesses and is concerned largely with his own security ("non-greedy but insecure"), then a reassurance policy may be more effective than a strategy of deterrence. If an adversary's motives are only driven by gains ("greedy and always secure"), then a reassurance strategy may fail. In a situation of mixed motives ("not-greedy but potentially insecure"), reassurance may be more effective as a complement to deterrence.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Janice Gross Stein, "Deterrence and Reassurance," in Philip E. Tetlock et al., eds., *Behavior, Society, and Nuclear War*, vol. II (New York, Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1991), 58-59.

As discussed in Chapter III, domestic factors may affect the outcomes of attempts to employ reassurance policies in two ways. If the majority of ruling forces within the potential adversary state are democratic, the strategy of reassurance will probably strengthen the position of the soft-liners, confirming the success of their cooperative policies, and weaken the position of the hard-liners, who stand for policies of coercion. However, if the preponderance of influential forces is non-democratic, the hard-liners will gain support if they convince others that cooperative policies are evidence of the success of their coercive policies. Also, shifts in the balance of domestic power between the moderates and hard-liners can alter policies. Moderates are more prone to adopt defensive strategies, exercise unilateral restraint, and pursue arms control and diplomacy, while hardliners emphasize more competitive policies in dealing with other countries. In the long run reassurance and cooperative policies may correct foreign leaders' misperceptions of hostility, reduce perceived levels of threat, and lessen the political power of hardliners.⁹⁰

Assuming the feasibility of gaining positive effects through reassurance and cooperative policies on such important factors as a potential adversary's motivations and domestic politics, it is reasonable to expect that reassurance policies could improve Lithuanian-Russian relations and consequently affect Lithuanian security positively. However, this hypothesis needs to be tested by evaluating cases in which reassurance and cooperative policies toward Russia have been used. Three cases are examined: NATO enlargement, Russian troop withdrawal from Lithuania, and the Kaliningrad issue.

A. NATO ENLARGEMENT

The first case is the process of NATO enlargement. The United States and other NATO countries adopted reassurance and cooperative policies toward Russia in order to facilitate the Alliance's eastward expansion. These policies were successful in overcoming Russia's resistance to NATO's enlargement—the main obstacle to the admission of Central and Eastern European countries into NATO.

In the beginning, the idea of NATO enlargement was not widely supported. According to Ronald Asmus, some officials in the U.S. government felt that the enlargement might threaten America's interest in supporting Russian reform; it could

⁹⁰ Charles L. Glaser, "Political Consequences of Military Strategy: Expanding and Refining the Spiral and Deterrence Models," *World Politics*, vol. 44, no. 4 (July 1992), 520-523.

lead to negative consequences by “playing into the hands of anti-democratic and anti-Western forces in Moscow.”⁹¹ Moreover, Western European countries also did not support NATO enlargement and this lack of support was not groundless. NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General John Shalikashvili, reportedly believed in 1993 that “NATO members, including the U.S., were not prepared to extend new security guarantees to potentially unstable new members...[and that] Moscow would inevitably view NATO enlargement as aimed against it.”⁹² Recognizing that Russia would oppose the enlargement, a German diplomat, Klaus Scharioth, suggested pursuing NATO-Russia cooperative policies in order to “address Moscow’s concerns and overcome Russian paranoia about the Alliance.”⁹³ However, an impetus for concrete policies to approach Russia in this regard was gained only after 25 August 1993, when Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Polish President Lech Walesa signed a communiqué stating that Moscow did not object to Poland joining NATO.⁹⁴

Further developments confirmed that an important factor influencing NATO’s decision on enlargement was Russia’s domestic politics. Russia’s motivation was mainly security-driven—to minimize the negative consequences of NATO’s enlargement or, in other words, to minimize its strategic vulnerability after the enlargement. The process of approaching NATO enlargement can be divided into two important steps—the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program and the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC)—that helped encourage Russia to agree to further NATO expansion.

1. Partnership for Peace

An important initial step toward improved cooperation between NATO and Russia was launching the PfP in 1994. PfP had multiple purposes, and one of them was to prepare candidates for membership without alienating Russia. According to Janice Stein, the United States used a strategy of restraint in order to minimize the negative domestic pressure on the Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, and on the pro-Western democratic forces supporting him. Further events confirmed the proposition that Russian policy

⁹¹ Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO’s Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 27.

⁹² Ibid., 35.

⁹³ Ibid., 41.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 37.

toward the PfP was shaped by domestic factors—in particular, the struggle for power between the President and the Duma, and the 1996 Presidential elections—and Russia’s strategic vulnerabilities.

In January 1994 in Moscow, during Clinton’s trip in Europe, Yeltsin supported the PfP. Yet, according to Ronald Asmus, there was one obstacle inhibiting Russia to join the PfP—domestic politics. First, there was the growing domestic pressure to adopt a more assertive policy toward the West. Nationalists and communists, dominating the Duma in 1994, saw PfP as a covert program for NATO’s enlargement and increased influence in Central and Eastern Europe. Second, in Yeltsin’s view, Russia, as “a great country with a great army with nuclear weapons,” required a special status in its relations with NATO. As Russian Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev said during a NATO Defense Ministers’ meeting in Brussels in May 1994, Russia sought a relationship “adequate to its weight.”⁹⁵ These objectives could be understood as a way to satisfy the Duma and strengthen Russia’s status in the eyes of the public after Moscow’s huge losses with the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Despite negative domestic pressure, Russia signed the PfP Framework Document in June 1994. This outcome could be explained as a result of two factors. First, President Yeltsin misperceived PfP as an alternative to NATO enlargement. Yeltsin and other Russians had a mistaken impression that the Western powers had promised during the negotiations on Germany’s unification that NATO would not be enlarged beyond the territory of the former German Democratic Republic.⁹⁶ Second, President Yeltsin strongly influenced Russia’s foreign policy. William Smirnov called Yeltsin’s regime a political system of “superpresidentialism with only a fig leaf parliament.”⁹⁷ The President determined the basic guidelines of foreign policy, the executive branch formulated and implemented it, and the Duma sometimes had little to say during this process. Yeltsin made his decisions despite domestic pressure. Yet he was strongly concerned about the

⁹⁵ Yeltsin and Grachev quoted in Ronald Asmus, *Opening NATO’s Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, 70-71.

⁹⁶ Cooperation with Former Adversaries, Chapter 3 in David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance’s New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 133.

⁹⁷ William V. Smirnov, “Democratization in Russia: Achievements and Problems,” in Archie Brown, *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 523.

negative consequences of opposition from domestic forces. For example, on 28 September 1994, during his visit in Washington, Yeltsin argued that the Visegrad States (namely, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland) could join NATO, but this step would cause a severe reaction in Russia—strengthening antidemocratic forces that he was “trying to keep down.”⁹⁸

After the initial meetings between the United States and Russia, Russia’s position started to change from an unconditional “No” to NATO expansion to a possible “Yes” under certain conditions.⁹⁹ President Yeltsin agreed to enlargement under two conditions—the process of expansion should be gradual and lengthy and Russia should not be excluded from NATO.¹⁰⁰ This was the sign that Russia understood the inevitability of NATO enlargement, as a result of its economic weakness and the dependence of its reforms on support from Western countries, especially the United States. Therefore Russia started to accept NATO enlargement but under certain conditions, and these conditions were clarified during further interactions between Russia and the United States.

The next round of discussions between the United States and Russia, which took place in Geneva on 17-18 January 1995, confirmed the importance of domestic factors in determining Russian policy. Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, during a private meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, revealed the main problem with NATO—the widespread view in Russia that the Alliance was still an organization inimical to Russia. Therefore, to make progress in NATO-Russia relations, the Alliance needed to address Russian concerns regarding the supposedly antagonistic nature of the Alliance, Russia’s public perception of the Alliance, the “closed and cumbersome” Alliance decision making process, and psychological fears of a military alliance approaching closer to the country’s borders. This time Moscow clearly defined how NATO could address its concerns. First, the Russians sought a change in the Alliance’s orientation, so that it would become a more inclusive, political organization. Second, the

⁹⁸ U.S. President Bill Clinton quoted in Ronald Asmus, *Opening NATO’s Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, 89.

⁹⁹ Yevgeny Primakov, *Years in Big Politics*, translated and abridged by J. B. K. Lough, report F70 (Camberley, England: Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Conflict Studies Research Center, June 2000), 2.

¹⁰⁰ Asmus, *Opening NATO’s Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, 89-90.

Russians proposed the creation of an institutionalized consultative mechanism for joint decision-making and asked the Allies to leave open the option of Russian membership. Third, the Russians asked that NATO conventional and nuclear forces not be moved eastward during the expansion.¹⁰¹ These concerns revealed the most likely motivations behind Russia's policies toward NATO's enlargement, namely its need to address the domestic political elite's demands and the domestic audience's uneasiness about NATO expansion, as well as to minimize the strategic vulnerability of Russia.

However, at this stage of negotiations, the most important goal of Russian policy toward NATO's enlargement was to arrest its speed. According to Moscow, the best timeline for NATO enlargement should be 10 to 20 years or at least 5 to 7 years.¹⁰² The two driving forces behind this goal involved domestic politics and strategic considerations. Domestically, Yeltsin's government hoped to have an agreement with NATO by the end of 1995 to ensure a better environment for the presidential elections in 1996 and to make the enlargement process less threatening for the president and the political elite that supported him. This was confirmed by Yeltsin's wariness about NATO enlargement in March 1995. Russian politicians were competing to use anti-NATO rhetoric in trying to score points against Yeltsin. Strategically, Russia wanted to be prepared militarily for NATO's enlargement—to reform its Army and to change its doctrine. A greater reliance on its nuclear forces gave Russia breathing space to implement its plans. However, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrei Kozyrev, admitted, during his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Geneva in March 1995, Russia's concerns were driven largely by political rather than strategic considerations.¹⁰³

Only after the United States promised to pursue enlargement “not too fast” did Russia agree to sign the necessary documents that facilitated further dialogue on NATO enlargement. During a meeting in Moscow on 10 May 1995, President Clinton proposed that if Russia participated in PfP and the two sides agreed on building a NATO-Russia relationship, the U.S. would support the idea that Russia would not be excluded from

¹⁰¹ Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, 108.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 110.

NATO membership and that the process of enlargement would be slow and cautious to prevent problems during the 1996 presidential elections in Russia. Russian President Yeltsin agreed and thereafter, during the NATO ministerial meeting in the Netherlands on 26 May 1995, Minister of Foreign Affairs Kozyrev signed Russia's Individual Partnership Program (IPP) and a second document called "Areas of Profound Dialogue between Russia and NATO."¹⁰⁴

The way in which Russia approached the PfP confirms that the domestic political factor was important in shaping Russia's policy toward NATO enlargement. The Russian president's fight with the Duma for power to influence foreign policy and his vulnerability to domestic pressures during the elections were the main driving forces behind Russian policy from December 1993 to February 1996. The United States' cooperative policies and strategy of restraint were successful in persuading Russia to approve the PfP documents that positively influenced the overall process of NATO enlargement.

2. NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council

The second step in the West's development of cooperative policies toward Russia was creating the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC). At this stage of interactions between the United States and Russia, it appears that Russia's domestic politics and strategic vulnerability were the main factors shaping Russia's policy toward NATO enlargement. Using the terminology proposed by Janice Stein and Charles Glaser, it appears that Russia's motives in essence were security driven. To mitigate Russia's concerns, besides the usual diplomacy, the strategies of restraint and reciprocity were used.

As noted above, domestic politics influenced Russian policies on NATO enlargement. The main problem for Yeltsin's government was not the enlargement itself but the attitudes of some leading politicians who attempted to use this issue to try to consolidate their position and to persuade the nation that Russia was facing an external threat. Andrey Kozyrev

blamed forces directly linked with Russia's powerful arms industry and special services for an anti-Western turn in Russian foreign policy. He

¹⁰⁴ Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, 117.

commented on these forces' efforts to convince president Yeltsin to pursue a more anti-Western policy and to present NATO enlargement as a threat to Russia's security as an attempt to consolidate their power and to stop democratic reforms in Russia.¹⁰⁵

Former Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Aleksandr Lebed held the same position and in an interview said, "The policy of democratic changes and reforms that has been pursued over the last five years in Russia is now in a stalemate. They [antidemocratic forces] are following a well-known route: seeking an external enemy."¹⁰⁶ Under these circumstances, it is reasonable to surmise that to undermine the foundation for such forces in "seeking an external enemy" some steps to address Russia's strategic concerns were needed.

Therefore, during the next stage of negotiations, the strategic factor became more important, and military issues gained prominence. Talks on NATO-Russia relations between the United States and Russia started in September 1996 in New York. Understanding that Moscow could not stop NATO enlargement, Russia tried to limit this process as much as possible, and by doing so it actually reduced the possible costs of enlargement. According to Evgeny Primakov, "the main thing for us was to prepare a document which would define a mutually acceptable development of our relations with NATO, which would promote the transformation of the Alliance from a Cold War instrument to a new organization, but which would also minimize the negative consequences of enlargement for Russia."¹⁰⁷

The United States took some steps to bridge the gap between the positions advanced by NATO and Russia. An agreement on four core ideas—non-deployment of nuclear and conventional forces, Russia's seat at NATO's table, NATO's open door for Russia, and a NATO not aimed at Russia—was reached at a meeting between Strobe Talbot and Evgeny Primakov in Moscow in July 1996. However, Russia insisted that some unresolved problems required special attention—military issues particularly.¹⁰⁸ The

¹⁰⁵ Kozyrev interview in *Obshchaja Gazeta*, nr.5 (1997), quoted in "Chronology of Events: Lebed's and Kozyrev's More Balanced Stance on NATO Enlargement," *Keesing's Record of World Events*, February 1997, available at <http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/krono.exe?470> (12 March 2004).

¹⁰⁶ Lebed interview in *International Herald Tribune*, 7 February 1997, quoted in *ibid.*, available at <http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/krono.exe?470> (12 March 2004).

¹⁰⁷ Primakov, *Years in Big Politics*, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, 170.

importance of these issues was raised during Russia's contacts with the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and the United Kingdom. These issues were "non-deployment of nuclear weapons on the territory of new members," "non-deployment on a permanent basis of foreign troops and related infrastructure," and defining the core principles of modernization of the CFE Treaty.¹⁰⁹

Addressing Russia's concerns, during Primakov's visit to New York on 23 September 1996 the idea of a simultaneous four-direction movement was proposed—NATO enlargement, NATO's internal adaptation, NATO-Russia, and the CFE Treaty.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, NATO-Russian negotiations were not as successful as they might have been. On 10 December 1996, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) stated that the Alliance has "no plan, no intention and no reason" to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members.¹¹¹ Moreover, NATO may have offered "more flexibility on arms control and reduction issues and more Western assistance to Russia's halting economy."¹¹² Yet, during three rounds of talks between NATO and Russia from December 1996 to March 1997, NATO was not ready to address Russia's proposal to include military issues in the main document. NATO Secretary General Javier Solana and Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs Gebhardt von Moltke, while awaiting the results of the Russia-American summit in Helsinki, were not prepared to accept this proposal.¹¹³

The Helsinki summit addressed some of Russia's strategic and military concerns. According to Yevgeny Primakov, prior to the Helsinki summit, the United States and Russia succeeded in "confirming the binding character of the document on NATO-Russia relations," including in the joint statement "an assurance from Clinton that there would be no increase close to Russia's borders of permanently deployed NATO combat forces" and "a statement on non-forward movement of nuclear weapons."¹¹⁴ Consequently, one

¹⁰⁹ Primakov, *Years in Big Politics*, 4.

¹¹⁰ Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, 172-174.

¹¹¹ North Atlantic Council communiqué, 10 December 1996, par. 5.

¹¹² "Chronology of Events: J.Solana Arrives in Moscow to Negotiate Conditions of NATO Enlargement," *Keesing's Record of World Events*, January 1997, available at <http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/krono.exe?405> (12 March 2004).

¹¹³ Primakov, *Years in Big Politics*, 10.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

of the results of the March 1997 Helsinki summit was Russia's formal agreement on NATO enlargement.

In the course of the subsequent negotiations between NATO and Russia, in March-April 1997, positive results were achieved, but two military issues remained unresolved—national ceilings of forces in the CFE Treaty and future military infrastructure. These problems were resolved in Russian-American meetings in May 1997 by agreeing “to include in the text provisions on the requirement to respect ‘all levels’ established in the original CFE Treaty” and finding a “compromise... on the issue of limiting future military infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe.”¹¹⁵ Finally, on 27 May 1997, the NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed in Paris. This event opened the door for further NATO enlargement to countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The negotiations on the NATO-Russia PJC emphasized the importance of domestic and strategic factors in shaping Russia's foreign policy in 1996-1997.

An analysis of the NATO enlargement process from 1993 to 1997 shows the importance of domestic political and strategic factors in determining the main course of interaction between the United States and Russia. The use of international issues for domestic purposes influenced Russia's foreign policy. The analytical framework proposed by Stein and Glaser suggests that security motives drove Russian leaders to minimize the domestic cost of NATO's enlargement and consequently to reduce Russia's strategic vulnerability. The strategy of restraint and reciprocity was successful in influencing positively Russia's position on NATO enlargement and in getting Russia to participate in the PfP and to establish the NATO-Russia PJC. This approach removed the main obstacle in the way of NATO enlargement.

B. RUSSIAN MILITARY WITHDRAWAL

This second case deals with the main actors of Lithuania and Russia. The OSCE and the UN were forums in which influence was brought to bear. Lithuanian cooperative policies were successful but difficult to implement because of domestic pressures on both sides and Lithuania's lack of experience in dealing with such a strong power as Russia.

The Lithuanian popular movement “Liberty League” organized signed petitions demanding a withdrawal of the occupation army in 1989. When this action was taken

¹¹⁵ Primakov, *Years in Big Politics*, 14.

over by the national movement for independence “Sajudis,” one million signatures were collected from a population of 3.5 million. On 13 March 1990, just after proclamation of the nation’s independence, the Lithuanian Parliament—the Seimas—asked Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to negotiate the withdrawal of the illegally-situated army in Lithuania.¹¹⁶ Negotiations between Lithuania and the USSR regarding bilateral relations started in August 1990; however, from the beginning the Soviet delegation obviously only feigned sincerity about the negotiations.

The military troop withdrawal was only one of the issues on the agenda of overall Lithuanian-Soviet relations. Therefore, at first, the basis for further bilateral relations had to be built in order to approach other issues, including the illegal presence of Soviet military troops in Lithuania. The process of building bilateral relations only gained a new impetus after the meeting between Yeltsin and representatives of the Baltic States in Jurmala, Latvia, in the summer of 1990, when an agreement to build relations between Russia and the Baltic States through bilateral negotiations was reached.¹¹⁷ It took one year to conclude the Lithuanian-Russian state relations bilateral agreement, which was ratified by the Russian parliament on 17 January 1992.¹¹⁸ The same day the Lithuanian and Russian presidents signed a bilateral communiqué in which for the first time the obligation of the former Soviet military troops to withdraw was officially acknowledged, and it was noted that negotiations about this withdrawal would be held. This event initiated difficult bilateral negotiations lasting for nearly one year and culminating in the signing of an agreement on 8 September 1992 about the Russian military withdrawal on 31 August 1993.¹¹⁹

In the beginning, the Lithuanian government’s decision on citizenship precluded the success of its negotiations on Russia’s military troop withdrawal. According to many

¹¹⁶ Ceslovas Stankiavicius, “Hanibalas Isvartas uz Vartu,” (Hannibal Kicked out from behind the Gates), *Lietuvos Aidas*, no.180 (2 August 1995), 3. This newspaper is published in Lithuanian, and all translations from this newspaper are by the author of this thesis.

¹¹⁷ Ceslovas Stankiavicius, “Occupacines Kariuomenes Kelias Atgal,” (Occupational Army’s Way Back), *Karys*, no.17 (August 1999), 2. This magazine is published in Lithuanian, and all translations from this magazine are by the author of this thesis.

¹¹⁸ In the meantime the USSR had disintegrated. The formal dissolution took place on 25 December 1991.

¹¹⁹ “Rusijos Kariuomenes Isvedimas is Lietuvos,” (Russian Army Withdrawal from Lithuania), *Karys*, no.9 (September 1996), 5.

observers, including the Russian political elite, the decision to grant Lithuanian citizenship to all the country's permanent residents who wanted it was the most important gesture of good neighborliness and gave an additional impulse to bilateral relations in the 1990s. Lithuania adopted an inclusive policy of naturalizing non-citizens. All permanent residents who were born in the republic or had at least one parent or grandparent born there were automatically granted citizenship. Those who did not meet these requirements but were residing in Lithuania in 1989 could qualify for citizenship by submitting a formal request, signing a loyalty declaration, and renouncing any other citizenship. This fairly liberal naturalization policy allowed Lithuania to reach an excellent result—95 percent of all residents of Lithuania are now citizens with full rights to participate in political life.¹²⁰ As noted by Aleksandr Avdeev, “this removed one of the thorniest humanitarian and legal issues that still unfortunately lingers in our [Russia's] relations with Latvia and Estonia.”¹²¹ The resolution of the problems of national minorities—ethnic Russian and Russian-speaking minorities in Lithuania, and ethnic Lithuanian and Lithuanian-speaking minorities in Russia—on a democratic basis and in accordance with European standards became a good basis for reaching agreement on Russian military troop withdrawal from Lithuania.

Despite achieving substantial success in the beginning, the results of the 1992 negotiations were mixed. The two sides agreed on beginning the military troop withdrawal, but this success was undermined by Russia's unacceptable demands. These political and economic demands were driven by Russia's domestic forces. The first meeting between the states' delegations was held on 31 January 1992 in Vilnius. The Lithuanian delegation was led by Česlovas Stankiavicius, the Russian delegation by Vice Minister Sergei Shakhrai. The Russian side proposed to leave some important military units in Lithuania for some time. It was difficult to see any important military justification for leaving Russian military units in Lithuania at that time; therefore, Russia's motive could be seen as trying to protract the process of military troop withdrawal. The Lithuanian side did not accept this demand and requested that all occupation army units be withdrawn by the end of 1992. The signed agreement

¹²⁰ Perry, Sweeney and Winner, *Strategic Dynamics in the Nordic-Baltic Region*, 27.

¹²¹ Aleksandr Avdeev, “Russian-Lithuanian Relations: An Overview,” *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, no.2 (Vilnius: Foreign Policy Research Center, 2000), 27.

confirmed only that the Russian army would start its withdrawal in February 1992, it stipulated that further negotiations would be held in order to determine the withdrawal order and a final date.¹²² Nevertheless, a first success was reached, and as a result of this negotiation, on 27 February 1992, the first Russian military unit left Lithuania; and, on 8 March 1992, the first garrison in Vilnius was officially transferred to Lithuania.¹²³

After Lithuania prepared a draft agreement, further rounds of negotiations took place in Vilnius on 11-14 February 1992, in Moscow on 18-19 March, and once again in Vilnius on 23-24 April. During these negotiations, further agreement was not reached because of the conflicting positions on key issues and Russia's unreasonable demands. First, Russia held that it would only have the basis for the complete withdrawal of its army after an agreement was signed. The Lithuanian position rested on Lithuania's occupation and forced incorporation by the USSR, which meant that Russia's unconditional international obligation was to withdraw its army of occupation. Second, Russia requested that its troops be given legal status for being stationed in Lithuania until they were withdrawn. Lithuania insisted that an illegally stationed Russian army could not be the subject of law but only a subject for negotiations.¹²⁴

Third, Russia wanted to obtain legal recognition for Russia's ownership rights to military installations and receive compensation for them. The Russian delegation also tried to pressure Lithuania for funds for new installations for military units returning from Lithuania to Russia. Meanwhile Lithuania demanded that Russia compensate it for military equipment and property annexed in the 1940s through the provision of weaponry and military transport needed to reestablish Lithuania's defense potential. Fourth, Moscow requested citizenship rights for military personnel and housing provision guarantees.¹²⁵ The first two Russian demands were political in nature because the Duma did not recognize the illegality of Lithuania's occupation in the 1940s by the Soviet Union. The third demand was financial and could be seen as an attempt to make the troop withdrawal less costly at Lithuania's expense. The last demand was groundless because all Russian military personnel who wanted Lithuanian citizenship and privatized

¹²² Stankiavicius, "Occupational Army's Way Back," 2.

¹²³ "Russian Army Withdrawal from Lithuania," 5.

¹²⁴ Stankiavicius, "Occupational Army's Way Back," 3.

¹²⁵ Stankiavicius, "Hannibal Kicked out from behind the Gates," 3.

apartments succeeded in obtaining these benefits; the only requirement for them was to reside in Lithuania for at least 5 years.

In June 1992, Lithuania initiated more fruitful discussions, but owing to Russian political obstacles, the discussions had mixed results. First, the referendum on the former Soviet military troops' unconditional withdrawal and compensation for Soviet damage was held in Lithuania on 14 June 1992. It had the strong support of the Lithuanian people. Second, on 30 June 1992, Lithuania officially delivered to Russia the schedule for the military troop withdrawal from Lithuanian territory by 31 December 1992. This schedule was based on the amount of cargo and wagonload requirement estimates, adjusted for Lithuanian railroad capabilities. However, Russia found this schedule unacceptable, and the negotiations deadlocked. At first glance, it looked like financial and technical problems were the main obstacles to withdrawing the troops on time. Russian military leaders claimed that "the troops had no place to go," and that, "the troops would leave only after several years."¹²⁶ However, Lithuania's National Defense Minister, Audrius Butkiavichius, refuted Russian claims that the withdrawal was impossible due to lack of housing for officers and overcrowding of railroad transport.

7,500 of the 10,500 officers have apartments in Lithuania whose sales would provide funds for purchasing new housing elsewhere. Lithuanian railroad officials calculated that Russia would require 224 trains with 10,000 railway cars to withdraw all its troops and equipment. The average of 55 trains per month would be slower than the pace of the withdrawal from Hungary (80 trains per month) and there would not be any overcrowding due to the 30% decrease this year in Lithuanian railroad traffic.¹²⁷

Furthermore, the Baltic States took steps to help Russia build housing for troops and their families returning from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ "Foreign Relations," Lithuania – Mass Media, January 1995, available at <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-8299.html> (23 April 2003).

¹²⁷ *RFE/RL Daily Report No. 125 3 July 1992*, available at <http://www.friends-partners.org/friends/news/omri/1992/07/920703.html> (12 March 2004).

¹²⁸ "Complete Withdrawal of Foreign Military Forces from the Territories of the Baltic States," G.A. res. 48/18, 48 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49) at 21, U.N. Doc. A/48/49 (1993), available at <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/resolutions/48/18GA1993.html> (12 March 2004).

In reality, there was a political obstacle. The escalation of the conflict in Moldova and the aggravation of ethnic tensions in the Baltic States made Russia's pro-Western foreign policy vulnerable to criticism from various "patriotic" forces that had found support in the Duma. Anti-Western forces in Russia—ultra-nationalists and the Russian military leadership—started to use the issue of the Russian diaspora in their fight for power and influence. The Russian military leadership had been trying to support the rights of ethnic Russians and Russian-speakers in the "near abroad:"

The first draft of the Military Doctrine released in May 1992 identified violation of these rights as a serious *casus belli*. The Ministry of Defence used these arguments to establish a linkage between the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic States and protection of the rights of Russian-speaking minorities there.¹²⁹

These negative tendencies directly influenced the Russian troop withdrawal from Lithuania. According to Vytautas Landsbergis, Lithuanian parliament chairman in 1992, some Russian military leaders, following instructions from Moscow, tried to postpone handing over installations. He expressed hope that the Russian Defense Ministry would abide by the agreements signed on 8 September 1992 and "not yield to delay tactics advocated by some conservatives in the Russian parliament."¹³⁰

Second, with the worsening of the internal political situation in Russia in late 1993, many politicians vigorously started to exploit the issue of the Russian diaspora for political purposes. For example, the use of this issue by the ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy contributed substantially to his success in the parliamentary elections of December 1993. Recognizing its pro-Western foreign policy's vulnerability to criticism from anti-Western forces and seeking to recapture the initiative, the Russian political leadership took steps to tighten its policy toward the Baltic States. The Security Council developed "The Guidelines of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation," which were endorsed by President Yeltsin in May 1993. According to this document, "Russian

¹²⁹ "Russian Minorities in the Former Soviet Union," available at <http://folk.uio.no/palk/PRIO%20Diaspora.htm> (12 March 2004).

¹³⁰ *RFE/RL Daily Report 8 October 1992*, available at http://muhu.cs.helsinki.fi/E-LIST/1992/92_10/92_10_08_15_21_04_0200 (12 March 2004).

minorities should be considered not only as a priority problem, but also as an important asset for Russia's foreign policy.”¹³¹

On 29 October 1992, Boris Yeltsin halted the withdrawal of troops from all of the Baltic Republics to show concern for the Russian minorities there.¹³² Moreover, the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, approved by President Yeltsin's decree on 2 November 1993, “indicated the readiness to employ [the] military instrument against the forces described as ‘aggressive nationalism and religious intolerance.’”¹³³ These facts show how Russian domestic politics influenced the course of negotiations on the Russian troop withdrawal.

The OSCE Helsinki summit, held on 14 July 1992, issued a declaration that required an agreement and a schedule for a quick, complete and orderly withdrawal of foreign military troops from the Baltic States. The combined effect of the referendum in Lithuania and the Helsinki declaration encouraged the pursuit of further negotiations. However, Russia turned to the use of pressure tactics on the Baltic States. On 6 September 1992 Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev met with the Baltic States' foreign ministers, and, as a necessary condition for military troop withdrawal, raised 11 requirements. To its earlier demands, Russia added one more—the Baltic States must renounce their requirements that Russia compensate them for the damage done by the USSR from 1940 to 1991. Lithuania declared such demands illegal and therefore unacceptable. ¹³⁴ The negotiations were deadlocked once again, and Russia's demands appeared to be, as before, political and economic in nature.

However, in the second part of August 1992, as a result of the economic pressure from Western countries and the consistency and firmness of the Lithuanian side, Russia renounced its unsound conditions and demands and started to yield to Lithuania's position. Negotiations also became easier after Russia's Ministry of Defense experts,

¹³¹ “Russian Minorities in the Former Soviet Union,” available at <http://folk.uio.no/palk/PRIO%20Diaspora.htm> (12 March 2004).

¹³² “Chronology: Russian Chronology,” available at <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/data/litrusschro.htm> (12 March 2004).

¹³³ “Russian Minorities in the Former Soviet Union,” available at <http://folk.uio.no/palk/PRIO%20Diaspora.htm> (12 March 2004).

¹³⁴ Stankiavicius, “Occupational Army's Way Back,” 3.

from the officer group “Scit,”¹³⁵ took over an initiative on bilateral matters from the Foreign Ministry. Therefore, both sides were able to reach a compromise and agreed on most articles. During the negotiations Russia agreed to compensate Lithuania for military equipment and property annexed by the USSR in the 1940s. It also agreed to compensate Lithuania for the environmental damage caused by the Russian army after 24 December 1991. As a result, Lithuania agreed that compensation for the damage caused by the USSR from 1940 to 1991 would be negotiated separately. On 8 September 1992, in Moscow, seven agreements were prepared and fully coordinated; however, just before the signing ceremony Russia decided to sign only three of them.¹³⁶ Russia turned to old requirements and tried to change the agreements to its benefit. This change mainly related to financial aspects; it wanted to change the agreement on damage compensation, and let its military sell the remaining real estate or leave these installations as common property. Later similar demands were imposed on Estonia and Latvia. Russia even asserted that without complete agreements there would be no legal basis for a military withdrawal.

Nevertheless, according to a UN General Assembly special resolution, the 8 September 1992 agreement was registered in the UN secretariat, and its implementation was mandatory.¹³⁷ These agreements, signed in Moscow by Lithuania’s and Russia’s Ministers of Defense, Audrius Butkiavicius and Pavel Grachev, enforced a schedule. In conformity with this schedule, Russian ground forces, air defense units, air forces, naval forces, and special forces, including the KGB units, had to leave Lithuanian territory. These forces comprised 34,600 Russian soldiers or 5 divisions and 295 separate combat and supply units.¹³⁸

The negotiations were also negatively influenced by domestic factors in Lithuania—the lack of experience with such an influential partner as Russia and the highly politicized issue of the Russian army withdrawal. First, according to a former Lithuanian Prime Minister, Povilas Gylys, the delegation from Vilnius could not agree on its top priority—military troop withdrawal or damage compensation. This disagreement, which was expressed openly to the Russian delegation, weakened the Lithuanian position

¹³⁵ The word “Scit” means “Shield.” This group of Russian officers sought reforms in the army.

¹³⁶ Stankiavicius, “Occupational Army’s Way Back,” 3.

¹³⁷ Stankiavicius, “Hannibal Kicked out from behind the Gates,” 4.

¹³⁸ “Russian Army Withdrawal from Lithuania,” 5.

in the negotiations. Second, these negotiations took place during vigorous political battles in Lithuania. The opposition wanted early elections and a return to power. In this situation, there was even a proposal to intern the Russian military. If implemented, this step could have worsened relations with Russia, terminating the negotiations about the military troop withdrawal and damaging Lithuania's international image. Anti-democratic forces in Russia could have used Lithuania's mistakes to stop the military withdrawal process. For example, the \$146 million figure as damage compensation was mentioned in only one unofficial document; and it was never officially stated as a requirement by Lithuania. It was nonetheless presented by Russia's mass media as Lithuania's main argument. Moreover, provocative Russian commentators raised the pressure with false assertions about mistreatment by Lithuanians of the Russian military.¹³⁹ Such an atmosphere negatively influenced the negotiations and made it difficult to reach a mutually acceptable compromise.

Although in October 1992 the Russian army began withdrawing according to the signed schedule, this situation changed in 1993. It appeared that Russia wanted to change the previously agreed conditions to its benefit by exploiting the polarization in Lithuanian society during the presidential election on 4 February 1993. This election was won by Algirdas Brazauskas—the former Lithuanian Communist party leader.¹⁴⁰ The Russian army did not keep to its schedule; there were demands in Russia to stop the withdrawal. The pressure to block the military troop withdrawal intensified in Russia. Just 10 days before the withdrawal was to be completed, Russia temporarily stopped it, claiming that it had to review the agreement. Only through international pressure—diplomatically and via Western economic aid to Russia—and Lithuania's consistent and firm position on respecting the agreed conditions did this situation reach a successful end. The final 30 Russian soldiers joined the last 300 preparing to leave the country on 31 August 1993. The whole Russian occupation army then withdrew from Lithuania, earlier than from Estonia, Germany, Latvia and Poland.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Povilas Gylis, "Pergale, Kuri Galejo Buti Lengvesne," (Victory that Could Have Been Be Easier), *Diena*, no.196 (31 August 1995), 6. This newspaper is published in Lithuanian, and all translations from this newspaper are by the author of this thesis.

¹⁴⁰ "Lithuania, Politics," *Lithuanian Information Resource*, available at <http://lupinfo.com/coutry-guide-study/lithuania12.html> (12 March 2004).

¹⁴¹ "Russian Army Withdrawal from Lithuania," 5.

This case revealed the main factor influencing the negotiations process—domestic politics. Russia’s Duma refused to acknowledge the illegality of the Soviet Union’s annexation of Lithuania, and this prompted Russia’s completely contrary position on the key issues and led to its unreasonable demands. For Lithuania the problems included an overly politicized process of negotiations and a lack of experience in dealing with such a strong power as Russia. The main motives behind Russia’s position were political and economic, and they were driven by domestic forces. Russia tried to use its political weight to keep its troops in Lithuania and to lower the cost of troop withdrawal. Without international pressure on Russia it would have been a struggle for Lithuania alone to protect its position.

C. KALININGRAD

The third case is related to the Russian enclave—the Kaliningrad oblast that was transferred to Russia after World War II. The main actors are Lithuania, Russia and to some extent the EU. Lithuania adopted cooperative policies toward the Kaliningrad oblast in order to reduce economic and political pressures in this region and consequently to reduce the danger of the Kaliningrad oblast becoming a security threat to the whole region, and Lithuania in particular. Despite the negative domestic political forces on both sides, Lithuanian cooperative and reassurance policies were mainly successful. Still, some problems remained that could be resolved only within the EU-Russia negotiations framework.

The case of the Kaliningrad Oblast becoming a “double periphery”—a Russian enclave in the Baltic region and, after Lithuania and Poland joined the EU, a Russian enclave in the European Union—could be dangerous not only for Russia and Lithuania but also for the whole of Europe. According to Vladimir Nikitin, it could disrupt the European Union, owing to the deepening gap in economic development between Kaliningrad and neighboring countries; and this could destabilize the Baltic region. This could be regarded by the European Union and consequently Lithuania as a security threat.¹⁴² Therefore, it is important to consider what policies Lithuania is pursuing toward Kaliningrad. So far these policies have been successful. One of the major factors that provided the background for success in the Lithuanian-Russian relations was the way in

¹⁴² Vladimir Nikitin, “Kaliningrad Chance: Realization of the Pilot Region Concept,” *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, no.2 (Vilnius: Foreign Policy Research Center, 2000), 101.

which Lithuania approached the problem of Kaliningrad. Lithuania was one of the first states, which adequately understood this problem and, according to former Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania Vygaudas Usackas, “pursued the most rational cooperative policies based on openness, transparency and mutual trust.” He has added that the Kaliningrad Oblast is Lithuania’s number one partner in Russia and Lithuania’s relations with the Kaliningrad Oblast will affect regional stability.¹⁴³ Therefore, Lithuania has engaged the Russian enclave in mutually beneficial contacts. Until May 2004, when Lithuania became a member of the European Union, a visa-free regime functioned between Lithuania and Kaliningrad. Kaliningrad trade crosses the territory of Lithuania, and Lithuania supplies Kaliningrad with electrical energy. Lithuania’s share of investment in the oblast is substantial. A joint association of businessmen has been established. Cooperation in other spheres is also expanding: in the humanities, medicine and environmental protection.¹⁴⁴

Two agreements between Lithuania and Russia deserve particular attention: (1) the agreement on the crossing points on the Lithuanian-Russian border and the procedures of military transit to and from Kaliningrad through the territory of Lithuania, and (2) the border treaty signed in 1997. In January 1995, Lithuania and Russia resolved one of a number of highly sensitive and problematic issues—military transit—and agreed on the procedure for military transit to and from Kaliningrad through the territory of Lithuania. In the course of the negotiations with Russia on military transit, Lithuania made a thorough analysis of the pertinent experience of other states and applied it to the regulation of military cargo transport in Lithuania. On 3 October 1994, the Lithuanian government passed the act on “Rules for the Transportation of Foreign States’ Dangerous Military Cargoes through Lithuanian Republic Territory.” According to this act, Russian military cargoes within Lithuanian territory are to be guarded by a Lithuanian military escort. Russian military escort weapons are to be secured in special boxes until their arrival at the border with Russia. Russian military escort personnel are not allowed to leave their van during stops. An additional annex to this act, which improved the rules for

¹⁴³ Vygaudas Usackas, “Lithuania and Russia: Knowing the Past, Building Genuine Partnership for the Future,” *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, no.2 (Vilnius: Foreign Policy Research Center, 2000), 15-16.

¹⁴⁴ Nikitin, “Kaliningrad Chance: Realization of the Pilot Region Concept,” 106.

the transportation of dangerous military cargoes, was in June 2000 endorsed by the Lithuanian government as Act No. 691.¹⁴⁵ The annually renewed regulations on the military cargo transport from Russia are likewise applied to the military transit of other foreign countries. There have been no conflicts between Lithuania and Russia on the military transit issue to date. However, this issue remains sensitive for Lithuanians. For example, during discussions about military transit in 1994, the media criticized “Russia’s intentions to travel freely through Lithuanian ground and air space to the militarized Kaliningrad oblast.”¹⁴⁶ Moreover, concerns regarding the possibility of transporting nuclear weapons by railroad through Lithuanian territory and the overall security level of Russian military transit were raised in January 2001.¹⁴⁷

Another noteworthy agreement is the border treaty, signed by Lithuania and Russia on 24 October 1997, ratified by Lithuania’s Seimas in 1999, and finally ratified by Russia’s Duma on 21 May 2003. In essence, the treaty reinforces an earlier administrative border between the two countries, which was demarcated in 1963. According to the treaty, any adjustments in the border must be insignificant and are liable to adequate compensation. According to Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov,

Under the treaty small areas of territory of each side were exchanged to compensate each other for a total of 413.8 hectares. The exchange was conducted on the principle of strict and adequate compensation; therefore, the territory of Russia and Lithuania did not increase or decrease by one square meter.¹⁴⁸

Lithuania is the only Baltic state that has such an agreement with Russia. This confirms the success of Lithuanian policy in dealing with Russia. Lithuania’s policy of engagement with Kaliningrad in mutually beneficial contacts became a good basis for resolving military transit and border issues. Lithuania helped Moscow reach one of

¹⁴⁵ Ricardas Cekutis, “Rusijos Tranzitas Skandalo Akivaizdoje,” (Russian Military Transit in the Face of Scandal), *Atgimimas*, no.1 (12 January 2001), 10. This newspaper is published in Lithuanian, and all translations are by the author of this thesis.

¹⁴⁶ Raimondas Kasauskas, “Svetimos Kariuomenes Tranzitas,” (Alien Army’s Transit), *Pozicija*, no.31 (August 1994), 2. This newspaper is published in Lithuanian, and all translations are by the author of this thesis.

¹⁴⁷ Cekutis, “Russian Military Transit in the Face of Scandal,” 10.

¹⁴⁸ “State Duma Ratifies Treaty with Lithuania on Government Borders,” *News Agency Rossbalt*, 21 May 2003, available at <http://www.Rosbaltnews.com/2003/05/21/62656.html> (12 March 2004).

Russia's objectives—establishing strong ties with its western region, Kaliningrad—by creating a more comprehensive legal basis. Lithuanian business, NGO and government representatives have been actively collaborating with their colleagues in Kaliningrad in their effort to advance mutually beneficial relations. For example, in 2001, 348 Lithuanian enterprises were functioning in Kaliningrad.¹⁴⁹ In addition to the border treaty and the agreement on military transit a considerable number of inter-governmental agreements concerning relations between Lithuania and Kaliningrad have been signed: an Agreement in 1992 on Trade and Economic Relations, which provided for most-favored-nation treatment; the inter-institutional agreement in 1992-1993 on transport; an inter-governmental agreement in 1994 on interstate travel of the citizens of both states; and the inter-governmental Agreement for Long-Term Cooperation between Kaliningrad Oblast and Lithuania in 1999.

On 9 February 2000, the Lithuanian Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vygaudas Usackas, and the Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ivan Ivanov, met in Nida to sign the “Nida Initiative,” which proposed to the EU coordinated initiatives in trade, health care, combating crime, strengthening border control and cross-border cooperation. This initiative was approved in June 2000 by the heads of state and government of the EU members in Santa Maria da Feira, Portugal. During 2000 alone this initiative helped launch several important projects with international support in Kaliningrad: the Eurofaculty, which will teach students in accordance with the EU curriculum; a project on “Reconstruction of Water Supply Systems of Kaliningrad and Environmental Protection;” and the European Union's Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) Cross-Border Cooperation program for Kaliningrad.¹⁵⁰

Despite all the progress achieved in improving relations with Russia, some negative points should be mentioned here. Domestic forces in Russia and Lithuania undermined the resolution of military transit and border issues. On the Russian side, the ratification of the border treaty was postponed by the Duma for nearly six years for various reasons, including at times its utility as a pretext to manipulate Lithuania on other

¹⁴⁹ Usackas, “Lithuania and Russia: Knowing the Past, Building Genuine Partnership for the Future,” 16.

¹⁵⁰ Usackas, “Lithuania and Russia: Knowing the Past, Building Genuine Partnership for the Future,” 18.

issues. For example, the issue of Russian citizens' transit was used to postpone the ratification of the border treaty. Russia's presidential representative for the Kaliningrad region, Dmitri Rogozin, by raising the "problem of Russian citizens' transit through Lithuanian territory," sought to block the Duma hearings on the border treaty.¹⁵¹ On the Lithuanian side, concerning the problems that impede positive bilateral relations, the issue of the legitimacy of Kaliningrad's belonging to Russia should be mentioned. According to Genady Kretinin, Lithuanian politicians often issue statements concerning a possible revision of the Potsdam treaty of 1945. The exaggeration of this historical problem could in some circumstances result in separatist tendencies in some parts of the region. Therefore, there is a need to localize the separatist movements that appear in Lithuanian politics.¹⁵²

At this point it is reasonable to conclude that Lithuanian cooperative policies in engaging Moscow about issues associated with the Russian enclave, the Kaliningrad oblast, were successful. Lithuania was able to solve a difficult transit question and was the first of the Baltic States to sign a border treaty with Russia. Despite some impediments stemming from domestic politics in Russia and Lithuania, these policies positively affected Lithuanian-Russian relations.

¹⁵¹ Ceslovas Iskauskas, "Ar Tikrai Lietuva nuo Rusijos Atplese Karaliauciaus Krasta," (Is it True that Lithuania Tore off Karaliauciaus Region from Russia), *Lietuvos Aidas*, no.53 (5 March 2003), 3. This newspaper is published in Lithuanian, and all translations are by the author of this thesis.

¹⁵² Kretinin, "The Russia-Lithuanian Relationship: The Regional Aspect," 117.

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V. CONCLUSIONS

Lithuania's security presently rests on several pillars, including membership in NATO and the EU and its relations with Russia. Lithuania's membership in NATO and the EU is the basis for its stability and security. However, positive cooperation between Lithuania and Russia is also important. Such cooperation helps reduce economic and political pressures in the Baltic region and consequently reduces the danger of the Kaliningrad oblast becoming a security threat to Lithuania. Moreover, Lithuania's security could be strengthened by integrating Russia into the international economic and security community. However, Russia will only be accepted as a reliable partner in international security after it has improved its relations with the countries that it historically dominated or even annexed on the new basis of mutual respect for the sovereignty and integrity of all states and a common sense of security in the region. Therefore good relations between Lithuania and Russia are mutually important and desirable.

In general terms, owing largely to the cooperative policies pursued by Vilnius, Lithuanian-Russian relations are good. Lithuania's independence was recognized two weeks after the Moscow putsch of August 1991, and this independence has never been questioned. Russian military forces were withdrawn from the country in 1993, a year before they left Estonia, Germany and Latvia. According to the Russian political elite, relations are not as close as they could be because of Lithuania's alignment with the West, but they are positive. Russia does not find many reasons to criticize Vilnius publicly, as it does with respect to Tallinn and especially Riga. Day-to-day relations between the ethnic Russian minority and the majority of Lithuanian citizens are conflict-free. There is no discrimination.¹⁵³

Lithuania contributed to reducing some of Russia's strategic concerns by presenting a confidence building initiative in accordance with the Statement on the Development of the Relations with Russia and Security and Confidence Building Measures of 28 March 1998. Vilnius extended an invitation to Russia to observe military

¹⁵³ Dmitri Trenin, "Russian-Lithuanian Relations: Will the Success Story Last," 71.

exercises in Lithuania, exchanging observation visits exceeding quotas set in the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty in military confidence and security building measures. Vilnius also invited Russian military and civilian representatives to attend environmental training courses in Lithuania.¹⁵⁴ These initiatives may help to reduce Russian uncertainties and avoid possible miscalculations. The increased state-to-state interaction through inspections and data exchanges may help to build confidence on both sides. It would also be beneficial for Lithuania to adhere to the CFE treaty. By doing so, Lithuania would reduce the concerns expressed by some Russians about a hypothetical increase of NATO conventional forces in the Baltic region.

However, there may not be much more that can be done to improve relations between Lithuania and Russia. Lithuania has little to offer Russia economically or strategically. They are unequal powers, and it would be unrealistic to expect significant positive effects on security in the region and for Lithuania from further initiatives by Vilnius. To improve seriously the situation in Europe as a whole, NATO and Russia must narrow their differences and rebuild their relationship. However, the role of Lithuania as a member of the EU and NATO and as Russia's closest neighbor in improving security in the region can hardly be underestimated.

At this point, addressing the previously raised hypotheses and questions is in order. First, it appears that

- Russia is potentially insecure and driven mainly by security needs. However, some signs of opportunism are also present, as a result of strategic vulnerability and economic weakness.
- Democratic political forces in Russia may prevail, but the negative influence of anti-democratic forces is still present and may be growing stronger.

Second, considering the uncertainty of further political and economic developments in Russia and the possibility of a direct military threat, Lithuania's membership in NATO may function as a credible deterrent and therefore should be maintained in good order. However, deterrence could fail as a result of Russian domestic

¹⁵⁴ Vygaudas Usackas, "Lithuania and Russia: Knowing the Past, Building Genuine Partnership for the Future," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, no.2 (Vilnius: Foreign Policy Research Center, 2000), 23.

factors (for example, misperceptions, cognitive failures, shifts in domestic political forces, and/or opportunistic motives).

Third, to compensate for the limitations of deterrence strategies, reassurance and cooperative policies could be useful. These policies may in some circumstances help decrease tensions between states, mitigate some concerns, and build confidence. These policies have better prospects for success in the following circumstances:

- Antidemocratic domestic forces in the potential adversary state have less influence than the democratic forces or are entirely neutralized;
- The state-to-state negotiation process is not highly politicized by domestic forces advocating coercive policies; and
- The bargaining power of the states is not substantially unequal and, therefore, a broader agenda of negotiations can be pursued in a more balanced manner.

Lithuania's ability to design and pursue reassurance and cooperative policies autonomously has become limited since it joined the EU and NATO in 2004. Some issues involve collective EU and/or NATO policies, and Lithuania must work with its fellow EU and/or NATO members to address them. However, the EU membership (or the NATO membership) acting collectively may make reassurance and cooperative policies more successful, and this result may positively affect Lithuania's security. Membership in the EU and NATO will reduce the difference with Russia in bargaining power, and this may make negotiations less politicized.

Fourth, Lithuanian reassurance and cooperative policies have been successful in the years since 1991, but these policies have two weaknesses—difficulty in implementation and the possibility of failure. The implementation of reassurance and cooperative policies may be difficult because of disturbing domestic forces, unequal interests in successfully concluding negotiations, and different power resources on each side. Although these policies are promising, they may fail. To begin with, little can be achieved in bilateral relations to improve regional security because Lithuania and Russia are at radically different economic, military and political power levels. Furthermore, reassurance and cooperative policies could fail as a result of the huge difference in bargaining power or if Russia's priorities became driven by extraneous factors. While

Russia has some legitimate concerns, including security, some Russian political factions would apparently like to go beyond the satisfaction of these legitimate concerns and seek to regain Moscow's former great-power status and dominate the Baltic States in political, economic, and military spheres. Russia's concerns are driven by both objective needs and the subjective opportunism of specific political forces. Moreover, it is difficult to measure the impact and to predict the result of reassurance and cooperative policies, owing to external factors, such as economic relations with the Western countries, changes in the international oil market and security environment, and decisions made by international organizations. Indeed, some observers might argue that the success of Lithuania's cooperative policies toward Russia could in some circumstances depend on Russia's economic and strategic weakness. Considering this, it could be dangerous for Lithuania, especially on its own, to build its relations with Russia only on the basis of reassurance and cooperative policies. Therefore, NATO membership should be the main guarantor of Lithuania's security, reinforced by the political solidarity of the European Union.

Four recommendations regarding Lithuania's policies toward Russia as a member of the EU and NATO could be appropriate. First, Lithuania should pursue reassurance and cooperative policies to compensate for the limitations of deterrence strategies, to mitigate any legitimate Russian concerns, and to build the basis for future mutually beneficial relations in accordance with EU and NATO policies and existing instruments. Second, to mitigate the potentially negative impact of the 2002-2004 round of NATO enlargement on Russian-Lithuanian relations, it could be useful to increase mutual transparency through dialogues on security among private citizens, defense officials and military officers from the nations concerned. Third, Lithuania should coordinate its policies with other countries in the Baltic region, and support initiatives conceived with Russia in mind, like the Northern dimension initiative,¹⁵⁵ in order to strengthen stability and security in this region. Fourth, Lithuania should engage Russian democratic forces in dialogues and in bilateral and multilateral activities in order to strengthen their position and consequently make cooperative policies more successful.

¹⁵⁵ The Northern dimension initiative, proposed by Finland and supported by the EU, promotes greater transparency and practical cooperation with Kaliningrad and other North-west regions of the Russian Federation. Usackas, "Lithuania and Russia: Knowing the Past, Building Genuine Partnership for the Future," 17.

Because Lithuania's security depends on many factors, carefully chosen and balanced policies are more appropriate than reliance exclusively on deterrence strategies or policies of reassurance and cooperation. The latter policies in particular will be pursued in the future by NATO and the EU as a whole and by Lithuania as a member of these organizations.

It would be useful to conduct further research on Russia's politics and especially on the main factors influencing its decision-making, because these factors will strongly affect the outcome of reassurance and cooperative policies as well as deterrence strategies. Russia is still in transition; therefore it would be premature to draw overarching conclusions about the nature of developments in Russia and to offer precise prescriptions for Lithuania to pursue. In order to define the appropriate policies toward Russia, a thorough analysis of potential developments in Russian politics over the upcoming decade should be conducted.

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